

## STUDY GUIDE



**NEW VISION**  
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THE CALLING TO GO  
MATTHEW 28:18-20  
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### MAIN POINT

Christ commissioned every church and church member with the task of making disciples.

### INTRODUCE

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

**What kinds of things do people in our community truly live for?**

**As Christians, what is our purpose? What should we live for?**

**How does missions relate to that purpose? It is possible to live out God's purpose for us without engaging in missions? Why or why not?**

### READ AND REFLECT

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

**HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ MATTHEW 28:16-18.**

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**Why is it important that we understand the authority of Jesus? How does this truth impact our mission?**

To carry out the Great Commission Jesus was about to give, the disciples had to clarify their belief about Him. They had to believe deeply that this One standing resurrected before them was more than just a man. He truly was God in flesh, God in power, and God in authority. As Jesus' disciples today, we have been given the same command of discipleship, and understanding and believing in the authority of Jesus must precede our obedience.

**HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ MATTHEW 28:19-20 AND ACTS 1:8.**

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**What, in your opinion, are the main challenges or barriers that keep us from obeying and fulfilling the Great Commission today?**

**To whom is Acts 1:8 and Matthew 28:18-20 addressed? What does that tell us about our identity as Christians?**

**Why do you think Jesus prefaced the Great Commission by reminding His disciples that “all authority in heaven and on earth” has been given to Him? How might knowing this encourage us in the task of making disciples?**

Both the Great Commission and Jesus' promise in Acts 1:8 are addressed to His disciples. If you are a follower of Christ, you are called by God to join in fulfilling the Great Commission. Jesus does not command us to do anything that He has not already equipped us to do. When Jesus commanded His followers to “make disciples of all nations,” He also promised to always be with them (see v. 20). Knowing that Christ is living in us should radically change the way we view ourselves. We are not inadequate to accomplish the tasks God has set before us because the Holy Spirit lives in us. God has empowered us to obey Him and join in His kingdom work.

## **APPLY**

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

**How might considering that you are called by God to participate in fulfilling the Great Commission change the way you think about your role in the missions endeavors of our church?**

**We often think of participating in missions primarily in terms of “going.” However, there are many other ways we can participate. What are some other ways we might participate in the Great Commission other than “going”?**

“Serving Jesus at work is about far more than giving a Christian theme to your business or staging awkward conversations about Jesus. It is about doing your work for the glory of God and the benefit of his creation and leveraging appropriate opportunities to make disciples as you go through life.”

**How can you specifically serve Jesus at your work?**

**What do you do well? How can you do it for the glory of God? How can it be used for the mission of God?**

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

Studies show that most Christians have never even shared their faith—most indicating that somewhere 90 percent of evangelicals have never shared their faith with anyone.

When have you recently shared your faith and if you haven't, why not?

## **PRAY**

Thank God for sending Jesus to save us from our sins and give us new life. Pray that God would help us to see ourselves as His disciples charged with the task of joining in the Great Commission. Ask God to make us mindful of the fact that He is with us as we seek to spread the gospel. Pray that the Lord would give us a heart for missions and make us active participants in the missions endeavors of our church.

## **COMMENTARY**

**MATTHEW 28:16-20**

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28:16-17. Some time during the forty days of Jesus' post-resurrection stay on earth (probably soon after they heard the news that Sunday), the eleven disciples and many more of Jesus' followers proceeded to Galilee, where Jesus had instructed them to go (26:32; 28:7, 10). Here Matthew's focus was back on the eleven, the foundation stones of his church. Jesus had apparently specified a particular mountain as their meeting place. At the end of the journey, presumably on the designated mountain, they saw him. Imagine their joy! It was only natural that they worshiped him. But some doubted (the word doubt means "to duplicate," "to be of two minds," or "to waver, hesitate"). All wanted to believe, but their faith was weak. Some experienced the internal tug-of-war between "two minds"—the one wanting to follow their fledgling faith and the other wanting to follow "reason." Even those presented with clear evidence for the truth can still have doubts. But the word some implied there were others who believed everything they saw. These were the followers of the Messiah-King who would continue on into Acts, willing to take any risk in obedience to their master. This was true faith in action, living on the edge of "risky" obedience.

28:18. Matthew noted that Jesus came near or approached. Here was no case of mistaken identity. The disciples could look Jesus in the eye and see that this One was the same Person whom Pilate had arrested. They could hear the voice clearly and know it was the voice they had listened to for several years. Jesus' claim made the need for decision even clearer: "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth." The kingdom Jesus talked about (4:17) had been established. The King had received authority to reign. This kingdom far exceeded the size of the Roman Empire. Only God could make such a declaration. Only One who ruled in heaven as well as on earth could claim such power.

28:19-20. On the basis of His authority, Jesus issued the Great Commission. Disciples had to accept the authority if they were to accept the commission. The commission is intricately formulated in the Greek. Stated somewhat literally as translated from the Greek language, the Great Commission reads as follows: "Therefore, having gone, disciple all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to keep (or to persistently obey) as much as I commanded you. And look here, I am with you all the days, until the completion (or perfection) of the age." The introductory "therefore" connects the Great Commission to Jesus' authority established in verse 18. The phrase "having gone" assumes obedience to the Commission. This phrase is not so much a call to go as it is a command to do certain things on the way. Disciples who recognize Christ's authority have one major task. The only imperative verb form in these verses formulates that task. Disciples under Christ's authority disciple the nations. That is, they share the gospel and help believers grow in Christ. Building the church by discipling the nations expands the disciple's journey. It sends them to the nations. Here is the universal nature of the gospel made explicit and clear. Disciples under Christ's authority must leave their comfort zones and the people with whom they feel at home. They must expand their horizons to incorporate every nation of people on earth. The church must devise plans and strategies to use the talents, gifts, energies, and resources of every one of its members. Every member must be on the move, discipling the nations.

In addition to going, discipling involves two other actions. The first is baptizing, which is to occur only after a person has acknowledged Jesus, the risen Savior, as his or her personal Savior. Baptism incorporates the new believer officially into the church. Baptism is also one means of making a public confession of faith. Baptism pictures or symbolizes what Jesus did and what the new Christian is doing. Jesus died for our sins. He was buried in the tomb. God raised Him from death to life. Baptism also pictures the believer's having died to sin and being raised to a new life in Christ, a life that is eternal through the ages.

The second action in discipling is teaching. This instruction reaches back to the earthly ministry of Jesus. It takes every parable, every sermon, every word Jesus said and teaches them to the church. It seeks to develop Christlike individuals. The teaching ministry begins with the New Testament accounts of the life and death of Jesus Christ. It expands to the rest of the New Testament and then incorporates the Old Testament as the foundation of who God is and what God planned long before He sent Jesus to fulfill Old Testament prophecies. This entire Word of God is the curriculum each disciple is charged to teach to new believers.