



SESSION 5

WE GO WITH CHRIST

Jesus sends us out as disciples
in order to make disciples.



WORSHIP

READING PLAN

Continue exploring the Book of Acts throughout this week. Use the space provided to record your thoughts and responses as you read.

Day 1

Acts 18:1-28

Day 2

Acts 19:1-20

Day 3

Acts 19:21-41

Day 4

Acts 20:1-38

Day 5

Acts 21:1-40

Day 6

Acts 22:1-30

Day 7

Acts 23:1-35

THREE IMPORTANT PARTICIPLES

One of the amazing characteristics of the Bible is that the deeper you dig into the text, the more you will find and the more profoundly you will be changed. The Scriptures are a bottomless well constantly flowing with the water of life. With that in mind, we can glean some more information about the Great Commission when we take a closer look at the structure of the text itself—specifically verses 18-20:

¹⁸ Then Jesus came near and said to them, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹ Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

MATTHEW 28:18-20

The Great Commission is essentially a single command surrounded by three participles. In case you're not familiar with that term, a participle is a verb used to modify another element in a sentence. “Going” (or “go”), “baptizing,” and “teaching” are the three participles contained in the Great Commission. Each one offers a helpful explanation of Jesus’ command to “make disciples.”

Going. Without being too technical, the word “go” found in modern English Bibles wasn’t structured as a command in the original Greek language of the New Testament. Instead, the term was written as a participle that means “in your going” or “after you have gone.” This term is directly connected to the focal point of the sentence, which is “make disciples.”

In other words, “going” is a necessary element of making disciples. We can’t help others encounter Jesus until we direct our focus outward, away from ourselves. Disciples of Jesus follow His example by going—across the street, across the city, across the country, and across the world—in order to show and share the good news.

What opportunities do you have to go on Jesus’ behalf in your local church and community?

What opportunities do you have to go across the world?

Baptizing. The practice of baptism takes place after salvation as an illustration of what happens when we become disciples of Jesus. In that moment of conversion, we join with Jesus in both His death and His resurrection—we die to our old selves and begin a new life for Christ and His kingdom.

Baptism is more than a symbol, however. It also serves as a public declaration of allegiance to Christ—a declaration Jesus commanded us to take in the Great Commission. Therefore, when we encourage new disciples to be baptized, we are encouraging a strong first step of obedience on their journey as followers of Jesus.

What action steps come to mind when you think about the importance of baptism?

Teaching. The final participle is “teaching,” which involves both intellectual instruction and practical training. If Jesus had commanded us only to teach new disciples everything He commanded us, we would be free to focus solely on the doctrines of the Christian faith. We could preach and teach about justification, sanctification, the Trinity, the fall, and much more—all without the burden of having to actually do anything.

But Jesus commanded us to make disciples by “teaching them *to observe* everything I have commanded you” (v. 20, emphasis added). We’ve been commanded not just to teach disciples about the practices of the Christian faith, but also to model those practices. We have a duty to help disciples of Jesus—ourselves included—learn how to take action based on what we’ve been taught.

Who has been influential in teaching you about Christian principles and practices?

Who has been influential in showing you how to incorporate those principles and practices in your everyday life?

Jesus accomplished His mission on earth. Thankfully, He goes with us as we seek to make disciples for His glory and in obedience to His command.



FIVE CRITICAL COMMISSIONS

We've seen that the Great Commission in Matthew 28:19-20 serves as a helpful summary of our mission as disciples of Jesus. But it's not the only helpful summary. In fact, there are five commissions recorded in the early portions of the New Testament—all given by Jesus to His disciples.

All five commissions are worth exploring. Review the four additional commissions outlined in the following Scripture passages, beginning with the Book of Mark:

¹⁴ Later, He appeared to the Eleven themselves as they were reclining at the table. He rebuked their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they did not believe those who saw Him after He had been resurrected. ¹⁵ Then He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation. ¹⁶ Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned."

MARK 16:14-16

What are your initial impressions of these verses?

How do these verses compare and contrast with the Great Commission?

Next comes Jesus' commission near the end of Luke's Gospel, although these verses serve primarily as a reminder for the disciples to carry out everything Jesus had already said:

⁴⁵ Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures. ⁴⁶ He also said to them, "This is what is written: The Messiah would suffer and rise from the dead the third day, ⁴⁷ and repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning at Jerusalem. ⁴⁸ You are witnesses of these things. ⁴⁹ And look, I am sending you what My Father promised. As for you, stay in the city until you are empowered from on high."

LUKE 24:45-49

***Jesus “opened their minds to understand the Scriptures” (v. 45).
How has the Bible guided your mission as a disciple of Jesus?***

In Luke 24 Jesus made reference to sending “what My Father promised,” meaning the Holy Spirit. The final chapter of John’s Gospel also highlights the Spirit’s role in empowering our mission:

²¹ Jesus said to them again, “Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.” ²² After saying this, He breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³ If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.”

JOHN 20:21-23

How has the Holy Spirit fueled your efforts to serve Jesus?

Finally, the first chapter in the Book of Acts contains Jesus’ final words to His disciples before His ascension into heaven:

⁷ He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or periods that the Father has set by His own authority. ⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come on you, and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

ACTS 1:7-8

What obstacles are currently hindering the gospel message from being fully proclaimed “to the ends of the earth”?

What action steps will you take in the coming weeks based on your contemplation of these passages?