

The Great Commission Missionary Institute

The Great Commission Missionary Institute is a practical instrument of Baptist associations, fellowships or churches to enlist and train large numbers of dedicated Christian workers to disciple and evangelize the unchurched people of their community and to open new work in unchurched communities.

Required Courses	Classes	Hours
Missions	<i>The Great Commission Is Personal</i>	6
Personal Ministry	<i>Your Little Flock Ministry</i>	6
Disciple Making	<i>Teach to Save Lives</i>	8
Discipleship	<i>First Steps in Christian Discipleship</i>	8
Church Planting, Growth	<i>The Church on the March</i>	9
Spiritual Basis of Ministry	<i>Spiritual Power</i>	6
Pastoral Leadership	<i>The Pastor God Uses</i>	6
Pastoral Ministry	<i>Pastoral Ministries in the Church*</i>	6
Biblical Homiletics	<i>Preach the Word</i>	10
Biblical Homiletics	<i>Dramatic Preaching, Stories of the Bible</i>	12
Christian Doctrine	<i>Doctrines of the Bible*</i>	12
Family	<i>Ministry to Families*</i>	9
Christian Leadership	<i>Dynamic Spiritual Leadership</i>	6
Christian Stewardship	<i>Your Prosperity Pleases God</i>	6
Elective Courses	(Listed separately)	12
Total hours:		120

Certificates Offered

Certificate of Study First 60 hours
 Diploma of Missionary Preparation Final 60 hours



THE GREAT COMMISSION IS *Personal*

Go, and make disciples everywhere



"Every Community on Earth Deserves a New Testament Church"



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Lesson 1

We Are People with a Mission in Life

Why were you born? Most people, all across the world, pass an entire lifetime without knowing the answer to this question. Without knowing God or His purpose for one's life is like being on a journey without knowing the road to take or to where the journey will end. Not knowing, such lives are aimless, largely fruitless, tragically in vain and even more tragic in their eternal consequences. Jesus describes these people as "lost." (Luke 19:10)

Now, Christian, why were you born again? Commonly, believers will say "So my sins may be forgiven and I may go to heaven." They hardly realize how self-centered this answer is. While it is true, it answers the question only from the vantage-point of self-interest, and not considering the purpose of the One Who saved them at great cost to Himself. If we ask God, "Why did You save me?" what would be His answer? Gratefully, we have answers to this question in the Bible. Listen to Jesus:

You did not chose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit—fruit that will last. John 15:16

Class discussion: Mark the right answers, based only on Jesus' statement:

- When you received Christ, it was because He called you personally.
- People can be saved without receiving the call of Jesus.
- Jesus calls each of His saved ones for His special purposes.
- Jesus doesn't care if our Christian lives are fruitful or not.
- Jesus saved us for us to purposefully go and bear fruit.
- The fruit Jesus gives us will last forever.

We do well to emphasize, as does the Apostle Paul, that we are saved by the pure grace and mercy of God and not because of any works we may do. We do not earn our way to heaven by what we do or do not do. (Most false religions and many "Christians" believe God will save them, at least in part, based on what they do to deserve it.)

It is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast. Ephesians 2:8-9

Comments: What must a person have, according to these verses, to be saved? What does God give us freely?

Since we are not saved by our works, it may be easy for many to believe that what they do with their lives is not very important to God. Paul, in the next verse, Ephesians 2:10 quickly corrects this false idea: ***For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God created in advance for us to do.***

Mark the right answers, and discuss all answers:

- You did not save yourself; your salvation is God's creative work in you.
- It is not necessary to trust Christ for salvation as long as one lives a good life—there are many roads to God.
- The reason God recreated you in Christ was so you could do the good works He has chosen for you.
- The main reason God saved you was to escape from hell.
- God has a plan for your life, special works He created for you to do.

Sadly, most Christians seem to live in ignorance of what a great thing God has done in their lives when Christ became their Savior from sin and Lord of their lives. They have a completely new standing before God and all creation. If Christ saved you from your sins, the following is true of you: ***You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.*** 1 Peter 2:9

Mark the right answers, and discuss each answer as a class:

- We were personally chosen by Christ, even as He told his disciples.
- We are God's priest-people, with the authority to approach Him in prayer for others and for ourselves and to speak to others in His name.
- We are now citizens of the Kingdom of God, the one truly holy nation.
- We entered the Kingdom of Light when God called us out of the darkness in which we formerly lived.
- We entered God's Kingdom by confessing our sins, trusting in Christ, and giving our lives and wills to Christ.
- There is something in our recreated life in Christ that makes us hate all that is corrupt, selfish and sinful.
- We can freely live as we wish, according to the world's sinful customs.
- We belong to God and are subject to Him.
- God's purpose great purpose in saving us was that we declare the praises of Jesus Christ who died for us and called us out of the darkness.



Opinions: How do we declare the praises of Christ?

- We testify to others what Christ has done for us.
- As royal priests, we declare the message that Christ has come to save and change all who receive Him as Lord and Savior.
- We prove how freely God forgives by continuing to live filthy lives.
- We demonstrate the power of Christ by our new lives in Him.

There are many things that we shall learn from God about the plan He has for each of our lives and about the good works He has prepared for us to do. The fact is that we will spend the rest of our lives discovering what these are. We will be learners, “disciples” of Jesus Christ until we take our last breath on earth. There are two things, however, that are of such great importance that they need to be stated right now and at the beginning of every Christian life.

In his final talk with the Twelve Apostles, just before his arrest and crucifixion, Jesus gave them what is best called “the Great Commandment.” Then, after He arose from the grave, He saved his most important words for the very end, moments before being raised from their sight into the clouds. These words are known as “the Great Commission.” Every new Christian should be taught these two special commands of Christ, because they speak of the essence of God’s purpose for each one of us who belong to Him. The remainder of this course should leave no doubt as to the meaning of the Great Commission for your life, and the purpose of the missionary institute is to train you to fulfill it well.

Even so, you must first think about the Great Commandment because it explains the attitude you must have if you will fulfill with success the Great Commission. ***This is my command: Love each other.*** (John 15:17)

Which phrases express your understanding of this command?

- Jesus is speaking of unselfish, self-giving love, just as we could see in His earthly life.
- If Jesus commanded that we love one another, He can give us the divine power to do so.
- Real love takes away rivalry, pride and foolish disputes.
- Real love supplies us with compassion, acceptance, and pardon.
- Even as “God is love” so the followers of Jesus are distinguished by a genuine spirit of love that comes to us from the heart of God.
- Here, Jesus was speaking of romantic love.
- We are saved only when we recognize Christ’s love for us and we trust Him with our lives.
- The strength of Christianity is not political, financial or military, but is the compelling sense of love in the lives of Jesus’ people.



Lesson 2

The Great Commission Is Your Mission In Life

It is believed by many Christians that the Great Commission is something given to a few people who feel called to be missionaries. However, Christ's last words were not for just a few, but for all those whom He bought with His life's blood on the cross. We are a blood-bought people, Christ is our Owner and Master, and His general commands, such as the Great Commission, apply to every one of us who have been saved by Him.

Understanding this, we look at the words of the Great Commission with greater interest, trying to understand how they apply to our lives. This can be one of the most important studies you will ever make. Let us begin by studying Jesus' exact words. Later, we will consider simple and practical ways in which the Great Commission can become a mighty reality in your life. Do not accept the Great Commission as a painful obligation in life but rather as something to help you experience the full power of a God-filled life. It is to begin to receive from God the fullness of His Spirit with the joy and peace only His Holy Spirit can give.

Jesus drew near and said to them, ***"I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Go, then, to all peoples everywhere and make them my disciples: baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and teach them to obey everything I have commanded you. And I will be with you always, to the end of the age."*** Matthew 28:18-20 TEV

This text may be thought of like a sandwich! What do we mean by that? Jesus begins His statement talking about Himself, about the great authority given to Him. He then concludes talking again about Himself and His powerful presence with us, especially with those who do what He commands. In the middle of this "sandwich" of Christ's authority and presence is the meat of the Great Commission. In that, Jesus talks about you and me and what our lives should be like under His authority, accompanied by His mighty presence. Study this passage inductively, answering the following questions:

Jesus' Authority
I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth.

Discuss: In your opinion, what is Jesus' moral right to give this command to all people who belong to Him?

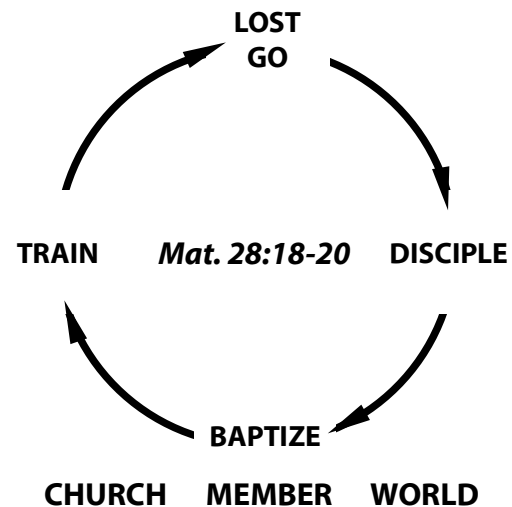
- God the Father has given Him absolute authority over everything on heaven and earth, and that includes me.
- It is unjust for Jesus to expect so much of me—I just want to get by.
- If I belong to Christ, He has full authority over me; if I don't belong to Christ, I will do anything I want to do.
- Jesus' authority comes from His supreme sacrifice on the cross where He secured for us eternal life.
- Jesus did not ask anything of us that He himself did not do while on earth.

The Perfect Plan of Jesus for Winning Our World

There are many plans today for the evangelism of our societies, and they are being constantly changed. That is because they are man's plans, coming out of our Evangelical traditions of the past and not from Christ. The plan of Jesus, in contrast, is a perfect plan and can be seen as a complete circle.

It begins with **GO** out into the lost world, **DISCIPLE** those we find there, **BAPTIZE** them, bringing them into the church, and **TRAIN** them to **DO** what Jesus told us to do.

What did he tell us to do? To **GO, DISCIPLE, BAPTIZE** and **TRAIN**. What will they then train their disciples to do? The very same thing! It is an unbroken cycle of compassionate disciple-making, changing our world in the process.



Command to Move Out *Go, then, to all peoples everywhere*

In the First Century, the power of the gospel quickly spread all over the known world. Today, it continues to spread, but at a snail's pace in too many places. We are surrounded by individuals and families who have never been taught even the basic facts about Jesus and the life He offers. Seas have been crossed with the gospel, but it may be harder to cross the street with it! Jesus seemed to anticipate this problem from the very beginning, because his first command was an order to move out with the gospel and not simply to hold firmly to it.

Interpret this phrase as you understand it:

- We are to “go” not so much to places as to people.
- We are to go to people wherever they may be found.
- We are to go only to people with whom we feel comfortable or who are like us.
- We are to go to people everywhere because Jesus has all authority to send us to them and He has authority where they are as well.
- If we go under divine authority, we don't have to be embarrassed or apologetic.
- The really important thing is that we stay in our church and have little to do with the sinful world outside.
- Jesus and the Apostles went straight to people in the lost world and rescued them wherever they might be found.
- The lost world always treated Jesus and the Apostles with great respect and immediately accepted their message.
- To go out into the lost world with the gospel is a genuine adventure in which we must depend on Jesus' mighty presence with us.

Command to Make Disciples *and make them my disciples*

How different are Jesus' thoughts from ours! In our “modern” Evangelical world, how many would believe that the number one job of Christians is to make disciples of the people in the world? At best, we think we are to convince people to quickly say “yes” to God after a statement of doctrinal facts we call “the plan of salvation” and then, hopefully, some may be discipled afterwards. We got it all backwards! Jesus tells us to go out into the lost world and make disciples there of the people who have not yet made their decision for Christ. When Jesus called four fishermen to Himself, He did not first give them a “plan of salvation.” To these men who did not yet realize that Jesus was the Lord and Savior of the world, He simply said, “Come, follow me, and I will make you fishers

of men.” Did they understand what He was saying? Surely not, but they were willing to follow and find out. To Matthew, He simply said, “Follow me,” and Matthew stood up, left his money table behind, and followed Jesus. In time, the disciples would understand who Jesus is and what it meant to believe in Him, but all that would come in the course of time. When they finally decided for Christ, it was not a superficial creed or sentimental decision—it was to follow him to the death if need be.

What does this command mean to us?

- Before calling people to “decide for Christ” they need to learn about Christ, His claims and promises.
- To become a “disciple” is to give time to learn about Christ.
- Jesus commands us to make disciples of people who are not yet Christians and patiently teach and help them to trust Christ.
- You can usually turn people into disciples of Christ in fifteen minutes time.
- People are made disciples by those who are willing to teach them.
- Jesus' concept of evangelism was to take time to teach and encourage people even as He did.
- We should not be surprised that many lost people are open to learning about Christ and how He wishes to bless them.

Command to Baptize

baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit

Much modern evangelistic methodology makes no emphasis on baptism. This is because most of those who make superficial “decisions for Christ” have no interest in being baptized and would be surprised if told that after “receiving Christ” they are to be baptized. Many of those who evangelize in this way see baptism as being an obstacle to people receiving Christ and avoid mentioning it. Jesus puts baptism in a very prominent part of His evangelistic method in spite of the fact that baptism is not essential to salvation. (A classic example of that is the thief on the cross who was promised paradise apart from baptism or any good works, other than that of repenting and declaring his faith in Christ's certain victory.) Why is baptism so important to Christ's way of bringing the lost to Him and salvation?

New Testament baptism, meaning full immersion in water, is a dramatic public declaration of repentance of sin, dying to the old life, being symbolically “buried” with Christ and risen to a completely new life with Him. (Romans 6) Such baptism is Christ's announced way to declare one's faith in Him and commitment to Him. The raising of hands in answer to a speaker may be useful to identify those who are interested in Christ, but if they do not want to publically show themselves to be Christ's new people by the radical drama of public immersion, the superficiality of their decision is all too clear.



Your decision about baptism as a vital goal of disciple-making:

- I believe that saving faith requires repentance from sin and turning in open faith to Christ.
- I believe that all that is required is a warm sentimental decision to “let Jesus come into one’s heart.”
- I believe that if Jesus comes into one’s heart, it must be as his or her Lord as well as Savior.
- I believe that even the demons believe and tremble, but they do not believe to the point of turning away from sin and surrendering their wills to Christ.
- I believe that Christ’s command to disciple people and lead them to public baptism is not something we can forget about when we go to the lost.
- I believe that one genuine conversion to Christ will influence many others to turn to him and is worth more than one hundred false ones.

**Command to Train them to Obey Christ in All Things
and teach them to obey everything I have commanded you.**

When we enlist lost people to become disciples and to begin learning about Christ and the life He has prepared for them, we have only begun the task! We are to disciple them until they become Jesus’ own disciples, holding Him as their Lord and Savior. We are then to baptize them, and through this bring them into the full membership of Christ’s body, the church. However, our teaching task has only begun. From this point on, we are to teach them to obey or do everything Christ has commanded. That is a lifetime assignment and is the responsibility of every church to all of its members. The verb “teach” here means to train people to do what Christ has commanded. Head knowledge is needed, but this speaks more of helping fellow Christians to put into practice the kind of life that Christ taught and demonstrated. What are we to teach them to do? Many things, but certainly to act out the Great Commission itself in their lives. This forms a perfect circle of disciple-making; (1) Go out into the lost world, (2) make disciples of people there, (3) bring them to commitment to God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit through baptism, (4) train them to do what Christ commanded, including (1) going out into world, (2) making disciples there, (3) baptizing them and (4) training them to do everything Christ commanded.

The Apostle Paul explained this principle to his disciple Timothy: ***The things thou hast heard from me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.*** 2 Timothy 2:2 KJV

What did Paul want from Timothy?

- That Timothy not keep what he learned to himself.
- That Timothy train others in the same way he had been trained.
- That Timothy should train others who, in turn, would train still others.
- That Timothy keep to himself all that he had learned from Paul

Which of the following statements do you accept as being true?

- We learn the Christian life by what we see and hear in those who are our teachers.
- We are to teach others in the same way we were taught.
- God does not expect me to teach others by my words and example.
- Every Christian is meant by God to be a teacher of others.
- I am to teach those who learn from me that God expects them to also become teachers of others.

**Jesus’ Powerful Presence
And I will be with you always, to the end of the age**

Opinions: How is this promise related to the Great Commission?

- Those who go out in the world to make disciples need Jesus’ mighty presence.
- Christ is especially interested in the work done by Christians to fulfill the Great Commission.
- This is a work that must be done to the very end of the age.
- We now live in a time when the Great Commission is no longer needed.



Lesson 3

Identify the People You May Approach

Go, Then

You now have an overview of the Great Commission. The remainder of this course will help you to understand in greater detail each of the elements of the Commission as practical instructions for your life in Christ.

Jesus' words are often uncomfortable! Just when we get comfortable with the fact that He is always with us, He says, **"Go, then!"** He is not entertaining us with His promises. He is using them to stir us out of our seats, out of our TV room, out of our waiting garden, and maybe even out of our city, or our state, or our homeland.

Where, however, shall we go, and how will we decide? In this lesson, you should receive some help with those questions. He tells us, **"Go, then, to all peoples everywhere."** Matthew 28:19 Good News Translation By this, He is saying that wherever people are to be found, He wants to send His missionary people. Still, as one person or one church, you must choose among all the people of the world where He wants you to go. In this question, Jesus' statement in Acts 1:8 GNT is helpful: ***You will be witnesses for me in Jerusalem, in all of Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.*** In this case, Jesus is telling His people to start right where they are, branch out into the province where they are, move then to the adjoining province, and finally ***"to the ends of the earth."***

Many are eager to go immediately to the ends of the earth, but they have no idea what to do when they get there! We may state God's truth this way: ***Our missionary journey should start right across the street.*** When we know how to make disciples of our neighbors, who speak our language and shop in the same stores, then we will have some good ideas how we may do this outside our town or nation. If a method does not work at home, do not be confident that it will work in another culture, even if the people should receive you warmly. People in many parts of the world are eager to meet Americans, and politely respond to their gospel presentations even if they cannot grasp the great spiritual truths they are being shown in a few minute's time. To be sure that you are successful, ask the missionaries or the national Christians to report to you exactly what were the results to be seen one week after you returned home.

Discussion: Does your church seek to reach people on mission fields in ways that are similar to what you are doing in your community? What evidence is there that the church's mission efforts are lasting? How can the church best evaluate the results of its mission efforts?

So, let us first think about how to be a missionary in your town. In your town, all peoples everywhere covers a lot of territory! There are many different kinds of people in every community and they live in many different neighborhoods. Briefly discuss the following questions:

Which of all the people are most likely to listen to you?

What are the greatest causes of suffering in the community and who are suffering most?

What group or groups of people are least likely to be Christian?

What groups of people in the community can most easily be helped or served by people in your church?

What language and ethnic groups are there and what opportunities do they have to know the gospel?

These and other questions may point to different opportunities. You may find a group of people who are without the gospel, but are very hard to reach. Others may be relatively easy to reach, but they may not "fit" well in your church, and need a congregation just for them. The "great needs" may be material, but in most cases they are desperate needs that result from Christ-less lives. The wealthiest people may be the neediest in some communities, but what are their felt needs and how can you help them?

Recognize Ways to Relate to these People

There are two ways to relate to people anywhere. First, is to join them where they are. Second, is to get them to join you where you choose.

Join them where they are: Christians go directly to the homes of lost friends and show them an attractive study that involves conversations based on Bible solutions to common problems. The couple tries one lesson, likes it, and continues to study with the Christian visitor(s). When they show spiritual interest, the Christian worker invites the family to become a part of a small Bible fellowship group meeting in a certain home. The friends find Christ and Christian fellowship and soon follow others into the church. This speaks of progressive effort – first, going to where the people are and, as they are being won, bring them together in where the Christians are, and, soon, into the church itself.



A Baptist deacon recently became concerned about young men in his town who spent hours on the street drinking, talking and shouting to one another into the early hours of the morning. He also noticed that many of them went to a park on Saturday and played soccer. He decided to go to them and play with them, and they easily took him in. After he gained their friendship, he suggested that they form a team. They followed him, and recognized him as their sports leader. He set up a program: Friday night, they would meet and study things related to the game, including a brief period of Bible study. Saturday, they would practice, and Sunday afternoon, they would play against other teams. These were the very hours they had dedicated to their vices before. No one under the influence of alcohol or drugs was permitted to play, by the rules they themselves established, and they started reporting that they were off these things. The Friday meetings were moved to the church, and a large group of men now gather there, and are beginning to come into the church itself, receiving Christ as Lord.

Get them to join you where you choose: In another community, two members of the church decided to have a Vacation Bible School on an empty lot. Many children came, some accompanied by their mothers. The workers decided to offer similar activities once each week, and many continued to attend, and, one by one, receive Christ as Lord. Finally, this resulted in a strong new neighborhood church, reaching many families.

Comments: Which of these methods might work in your community? What other methods might be used there that first go to where the people are and then gets them to join you where you are?

Pray and Follow the Lord

You and others in your church may feel God is calling you to be missionaries in your own town, but not know where to begin or what to do.

If you decide, using only your own insights, the work will probably fail. Christ is the “Lord of the Harvest” and He is eager to lead you to the people who need you and need Him, and He will help you to know what to do. For this, you must pray constantly and humbly, promising to go where He sends you. In His time, you will know with great confidence where you are to go and what you are to do, and He will go before you in great power and authority, preparing the people for you. Learn to see the people in their great needs and spiritual poverty and ask yourself how you might have an opportunity to become their friends and make them your disciples. Recognize the many different groups of people who make up your town. Think about their needs and how you might be able to help them. Following is a short list of some of the groups there probably are in your home mission field:

- Children, after school and during boring summer vacations
- Mothers of little children who miss adult friendship
- Seniors whose families are scattered and who face new trials in life
- Single mothers who struggle alone to support their children
- Immigrants who speak English poorly and are trying to fit into society
- Widows and widowers who feel life has left them behind
- Business people who struggle to keep their business going
- Parents whose children are lost to drugs or incarceration
- School teachers who struggle in what may seem impossible circumstances
- Alcoholics, drug, gambling or pornography addicts who know they lost the way
- Prisoners, the handicapped, university students, military
- Ethnic and foreigners

Consider “Samaria” and “the Uttermost Parts of the World”

After you understand better how to be a missionary in your own community, you will be better prepared to understand the needs of other communities, even of those in distant lands. Most mission efforts by teams from the United States are most successful when they go to assist the local churches in their missionary efforts—in which the team works alongside workers from the local church. A typical mission team spends a week in a community, but the local church is there constantly. It speaks the language and knows the culture and people. The visiting team may create great interest, but if it is not strengthening the ongoing work of the local church or churches, its impact will be a passing thing.

If you and your church have an opportunity to go to a distant land, go where you can be confident of working to help national churches that have the same missionary vision that you have. Your work will be to open doors in the community for them. You will set examples for them and you will encourage them to do the kind of work that will continually draw people to Christ and his church.

Prayerfully respond: Which of the groups listed are groups to which your church can serve? To which group or groups do the students feel led to minister?



Lesson 4

And Make Disciples

This is undoubtedly the most controversial part of Jesus' Great Commission and is very different from current Evangelical tradition. Yet, it is proving again to be, by far, the most successful way to transform lost and darkened communities into towns and villages of light. We should not be surprised that Jesus knew what He was talking about!

It is controversial for many reasons, but mainly because it is not our usual way of doing things. We say 1) go, 2) evangelize the people. But that is all! We do not mention baptism to them. We only hope they will begin to come to church or that somebody else will follow-up and "disciple" them. Jesus says, 1) go, 2) make disciples of the (lost) people, bringing them to Christ, 3) baptize them and 4) train them to do the same. Traditionally, our goal is for "professions of faith." We go with an insistent call for strangers to say they believe but with little knowledge of Christ. In contrast, Jesus goes lovingly saying "**Learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls.**" Matthew 11:29b Jesus calls on people to learn of Him before He asks them to believe in Him. We should understand this easily, because most of us learned much of whom and what Jesus is long before we surrendered our lives to Him. The process can be accelerated, but it cannot be successfully avoided.

Two Ways to Make Disciples of Lost People

How are we to make disciples of lost people? There are two basic methods that usually go together. First, we need to serve them, even as Jesus served the people. Secondly, we must teach them and they must be willing to learn.

Serve Them

Jesus described His life's goals and ours when He said, **Whoever wants to be first must be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.** Matthew 20:27-28 In our pride, we do not like to think of ourselves as anyone's slave. Jesus said that true greatness is to make yourself the servant of others. This was the standard for His own life and, if you follow Him, it is yours also. This is the noble decision where your making of disciples begins.



But how will you serve others? First and above all, it is to have compassion for them and pray for them.

Pray for them. The next lesson series will give you many practical suggestions about how to pray for others in a way that your prayers will begin to change their lives, open them to God, and bring them to learn about Him from you. We call this "**Your Little Flock Ministry.**" It means that you must identify in your own mind the people that God is calling on you to especially serve. These are those for whom you will regularly pray and encourage and be prepared to teach the message of hope and life in Jesus Christ.

There are several reasons that our making of disciples must begin by praying for specific people whom God can turn into our disciples. First, this focuses your life and your ministry on these people. Secondly, when we pray for them, this enables God to begin to work directly in their hearts. You become, in prayer, a "co-laborer" with God in the winning of these people. Thirdly, you will ask them if you might pray for them, and almost everyone will welcome that attention and support. You will ask them for specific needs and keep in touch with them to see how God is working. In this way, they become aware that God is interested in them and that you are God's servant and their servant as well. Fourthly, when these people begin to open their hearts to God and to His Word, both you and they know that this is the work of God. Finally, God will answer your prayers for them, and they will turn away from sin and receive Christ as Lord. This does not happen because of your persuasive powers or your clever evangelism. It is the very work of God, and He will receive all the glory. We seek transformed lives, not shallow professions of faith. God will do it. Prayer is the key.

Serve them in simple ways. There may be practical ways you can help others, along with your prayers for them. This will open doors for you to teach them, and, certainly, teaching them is a mighty way to serve them, as it was for Jesus. You might serve them in simple matters like any friend would help another. You may develop a ministry in which you serve them or at least in which you serve some of the people on your prayer list. For example, it could be some interesting children's ministry in which you invite their children. It could be to teach others how to make a better living. It might be counseling troubled couples or troubled young people. It might be to make minor repairs in the house of a single mother or an elderly couple. There are thousands of ways in which people need help. You need to study these and see what kind of help you are best able to give.

For example, an attractive Christian young woman asked her hairdresser if she could teach pointers in makeup and improving personal appearance and also teach **“True Beauty”** which uses six Bible stories to reveal the secrets of inner beauty. “Yes,” was the response, and soon six women were studying in the beauty salon on an off hour. In time, all became born-again Christians. **“True Beauty”** is another of the **Bible Events Series**.

A church member approached his pastor saying he could offer training in soccer, and they could attract lost families from the neighborhood for this. The pastor agreed. They prepared a soccer field where only weeds had grown and enlisted large numbers of youth and adults. In time, the church grew substantially by those who came to it only to learn how to play soccer. Incidentally, the team won the regional trophy the very first year it played!

In My Name. A grave danger in offering “ministries” of public interest to the community is the tendency to do so without any mention of Christ or of His message. We are commanded to make disciples and should use every opportunity to do so. One well-known Christian organization told missionaries that their work in the country is “pure ministry.” By that, they meant that there was no Bible teaching, no Biblical or religious emphasis. It was like a secular organization in that regard, and they felt that this was proof of not having any “ulterior motives” and it was, therefore, “pure ministry.”

Jesus was clear about this matter: ***Whoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name... he shall not lose his reward.*** Mark 9:41 If we serve because Christ moves us to do so, we should give Christ the credit and not ourselves or our organization. Sadly, many fine ministries are conducted by churches, Christians, and Christian organizations in which no credit is given to the Lord and no effort is made to use the platform to at least begin the disciple-making process that is so important to the heart of Christ who yearns for the sheep that are lost and without a shepherd.

Discussion: What kinds of ministries have the members of the class observed that can bring people to experience at least brief interactive studies that use Bible stories as their base? What new ministries occur to them that can accomplish this?



Teach Them

To teach people to grow in faith and come to God is the greatest service you can do for anyone. Serving and teaching people are two parts of the same holy ministry. To the four fishermen, cleaning their nets, Jesus said, ***“Follow me and I will make you fishers of men.”*** Matthew 4:19 To Matthew, He simply said, ***“Follow me.”*** ***And he arose and followed him.*** Matthew 9:9 Did those men really know who Jesus was? Did they know the plan of salvation? Were they Christian men? No, no, no. But they had a hunger in their heart and they thought Jesus might be able to satisfy it. Jesus said, in effect, “Follow me, and find out for yourselves.”

Jesus said to us, ***“As the Father hath sent me, even so send I you.”*** John 20:21 We are sent by the same Father, for the same purpose, to work in much the same way. Jesus went to invite people to learn from Him; we are certainly to do the same. A mistaken humility might raise its head saying, “Who am I to be anyone’s teacher?” Jesus’ answer is that he is sending you; you go under his authority, and His authority stretches from heaven to earth. He told you to go make pupils! What more is there to say?

“But no one will listen to me,” says one and “I don’t know how to teach” says another. And a third says, “I don’t know what to teach.” Three seemingly good excuses! That is why it is important for you to have missionary training! However, you will not have to wait long before you will have positive answers to all three excuses and you will be making and teaching disciples and they will come to Christ, become new creatures in Him, and then join you as fellow missionaries on the trail. Even this chapter should begin to answer your doubts.

Offer Studies People Want. Many people will welcome studies that interest them. For those who want to know more about Jesus, they may greatly enjoy working through the booklet **“People Who Knew Jesus.”** This tells six stories about Jesus and what happened to the people who met Him. Best of all, these stories are not given as lectures, but are read aloud by the students and then they answer simple questions that help them understand for themselves the great truths revealed there. For people facing a great crisis in their lives, the four lessons in **“There Is Hope”** are very welcome. The disciple-maker invites them to participate in the **“National Bible Reading Campaign”** and learn for themselves how delightful the Bible is. This campaign will be well explained in later studies. The materials are so simply taught, that we have seen lost people take them and teach them to their own families! It is somewhat like inviting someone to work together on a correspondence course in which there is no writing necessary.

There are many concerns in life that people are anxious to talk about but find little opportunity to do so. A whole series of discussions based on Bible stories is available in the **Bible Events Series**. These discussions are grouped by general topics, such as **Stress Survivors, Where Is God When I Need Him? Overcoming Loneliness, A Happy Marriage** and many others. After reading the Bible story, important questions are raised with several possible answers and students choose their answers and express their opinions. Faith is steadily built and the Bible becomes a treasure book.

Children often feel neglected and left to their own care. They love happy adults and young people who come to tell them stories with which the children themselves interact. How much better when these are Bible stories and the children learn, lesson by lesson, of God's love for them and see the heroic response of others to the great challenges of life. The **National Bible Reading Campaign** offers a series of 260 Bible stories of this nature, which are interactive and invite the artwork of the students.

These are examples of approaches in which disciples are made for the asking. They respond to the invitation, enjoy the first experience, and most often they continue the experience indefinitely, meeting Christ, being baptized into the church, and readied for missionary training, just as Christ ordered!

Comments: Which of the following groups in your community might be interested in becoming a part of these life-needs related interactive Bible studies? Retired adults, neighborhood women who stay at home during the day, neighborhood children, men and women during work lunch hour, school children after school, prisoners in a local jail or prison.



Lesson 5

Baptize Them

We see that Jesus' progressive command or commission is 1) to go out into the lost world 2) making disciples there and, now, we see 3) baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Modern evangelism lays little stress on baptism and the evangelistic invitation is often watered down to the least objectionable kind of invitation. "Will you receive Jesus into your heart?" we have asked. What Apostle ever closed his message with words such as these? Peter, in contrast, said **Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.** Acts 2:38 His was not a call to a sentimental good feeling about Jesus, but a call to stop, turn away from a life of sin, and demonstrate to the world the sincerity of one's decision by the public act of immersion. This act shows the death to the old life and resurrection to the new life in Christ. Any attempt to make the gospel invitation short of this is heresy!

The Requirement of Repentance and Faith

Of course, many have tried to use this verse to prove that baptism is essential to salvation, and if the verse stood alone in the Scriptures, we might wonder if they are right. A multitude of Bible passages affirm that salvation is received through repentance and faith, without mention of baptism. Paul explained it in these terms: **I have declared to both Jews and Greeks that they must turn to God in repentance and have faith in our Lord Jesus.** Acts 20:21

What is the class's understanding of this verse?

- It is necessary to turn in full faith to God, repenting of sin to be saved
- It is too strong to say that both repentance and faith are necessary.

Among Jesus' last words were the following: **He told them, "This is what is written: 'The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.'" Luke 24:46-47**

What do you understand this verse to mean?

- Salvation depends on the sacrificial death of Christ and his resurrection.
- God's forgiveness of any person is based on repentance of sins (the decision to turn away from a sinful life.)
- These two great facts are the basis of God's message to the whole world.
- Only religious fanatics believe that one must turn from a sinful life to be forgiven of sin and saved.

Simon Peter, in his second sermon to the Sanhedrin declared, in regard to Jesus, **God exalted him to his own right hand as Prince and Savior that he might give repentance and forgiveness of sins to Israel.** Acts 5:31

Answer the following:

- God put Jesus at his own right hand with great authority
- The opportunity to repent and be saved is seen as a gift from Christ.
- Repentance has little to do with salvation, since most people never repent.
- Repentance and forgiveness of sins necessary go together. No repentance means no forgiveness of sins.

What, then, is the relationship between repentance, faith and baptism? Try to visualize the following: A lost man is walking down his own chosen pathway of life. He is in charge of his life—God has nothing to do with it. He does what he wants to do instead of God's will, and this is the basis of all sin. The farther he goes on his own path, the more trouble, loneliness and sorrow he falls into. He may come to hate what he has done and fears where his path is taking him. He is lost and is on his way to eternity without God.

Behind him, he begins to hear the voice of Jesus. Jesus offers him forgiveness of his sins, putting him on the road to heaven. The man decides to turn around and walk on the path of Jesus, following him all through his lifetime to heaven itself. When the man turned around, he turned his back to his old selfish Godless way and turned in faith the Jesus, who offered him full salvation. That turn is called "conversion." Turning his back on his old life is called "repentance" and turning in trust to Jesus is called "faith." Actually, repentance and faith are two parts of the same act. Repentance is what the man turned from and faith is to whom he turned, when he believed.

Baptism is the public act of declaration of one's conversion. And it pictures the same thing in a different way. As the person is dipped beneath the water, he dramatizes that he has died to his old self-centered life and is "buried." When he is raised from the water, he testifies that he is risen to a new Christ-centered life. (Reference: Romans 6)



There are many ways a person can testify of having such a conversion. Someone may ask him or her to raise a hand, or stand up, or pray aloud or sign a card. While these may be practical ways to show one's decision, they are short of what Jesus asks. He tells us, "You baptize them!" Why should people be baptized if they are saved by repentance and faith and not the waters of baptism?

Baptism by immersion (which was the only baptism practiced by the Apostles) is a radical public act. It is not to be done secretly—it is a public testimony of a decision that is made to give one's life to Christ. It is an act that impresses the new believer and others who observe it—it is not easily forgotten, as might be the raising of a hand. Any baptism that does not include immersion fails to dramatize what has happened spiritually to the person being baptized.

What if one cannot be immersed? The thief on the cross is only one example. There are prisoners in parts of the world today who are not permitted to be baptized. Some people turn to Christ on their deathbeds, and cannot be immersed. Are they saved by repentance and faith alone? The verses we read assure us that they are. However, this is no excuse for someone who can be baptized and chooses not to be. And it suggests that such a person really has not repented of sin or truly trusted in Christ for salvation. A person is saved by turning from self-rule to Christ's rule, trusting Christ's promise of eternal life. The first command to such a person is to be baptized. If the person says, "No, I don't think I will obey Jesus in that command" it is clear that true repentance has not taken place.

For many, this is a radical departure from "easier" evangelistic invitations. We have many customs that differ from the plain teachings of the Lord. On the Day of Judgment, our work will be tested by fire. (1 Cor. 3:10-15) Solid missionary work will be based on solid Biblical teachings.

Discussion: Why does the class think Jesus commanded baptism?

Infant Baptism and Believers' Baptism

Many people in the world have been "baptized" as babies, and ask what they should do about the New Testament teachings on baptism. They may see being baptized by immersion as a believer in Christ as something that is Biblically desirable but, at the same time, as being disrespectful of their parents whose faith led them to ask for the baptism of their children.



The practice of baptism was changed across the centuries. The first error was to believe that baptism was necessary for salvation. Years after that idea became more common, theologians said that it would be best for everyone to be baptized, and have it done as babies. A final change was made on about the year 1000 AD when Western Europeans decided to baptize babies by pouring or sprinkling and not immersion. Very obviously, Christianity moved away from the clear teachings of the Bible regarding baptism, and took on new customs and traditions that became revered by millions of people. However, people must finally decide if they will live by human religious traditions or by what the Holy Scriptures plainly teach.

This is not, however, to disrespect the decision of parents who had their babies "baptized" in the manner they understood to be baptism. Few parents who have done so first carefully studied what the Bible says about baptism, and for them, they were bringing their children to the house of God to dedicate them to God and ask God's blessing on them. This is at least somewhat like the act of Hannah who dedicated her first son, Samuel, to God and to his service, and he became a mighty man of God. (1 Samuel 1)

All parents should be admonished to dedicate their children to God, praying that they will become His faithful servants. We respect those who did this through the rite of infant baptism. It is a rich heritage to know that one's parents purposefully dedicated one to God in infancy. This does not assure salvation, but it is an act of faith by the parents. New Testament Christians do not baptize babies, but do well to bring them before their congregations and publicly dedicate their babies and themselves to God.

If a person was "baptized" in this manner, he or she should thank God and one's parents for this act of faith on their part. Now that one knows Christ personally, he or she should proceed with the act of immersion that proclaims one's saving faith in the Lord.

Opinions: How would you instruct a new Christian who was baptized as a baby?

Lesson 6

Train Them to DO Everything He Commanded

Here is the final objective of the Great Commission: **..and teaching them to do everything I commanded you.** Matthew 28:20a This is what completes the strategic circle of activities by which Christ will transform the world using us, His disciples. We dare not read these words with little concentration or understanding. May God instruct us now.

To “teach” in this sense is to “train.” That is because Jesus said that we are to teach the baptized **to do** everything He commanded. This is not an emphasis on “teaching the Bible” or “instructing in doctrine” though both things are important. He is talking about our actually training Christians to DO everything He commanded us to DO. In our churches, we may have a lot of teaching and perhaps even giving of certificates, filling heads and hearts with precious knowledge. While this is important, it is not Christ’s final objective for our teaching. That objective is to help our people DO, act out, live out EVERYTHING He commanded us to do. In most schools, the effectiveness of teaching is evaluated by examinations and measured by number or letter grades. In the School of Christ, we are to be evaluated by what we actually DO with our lives.

The Great Reformation, and the birth of the Protestant movement, brought much of Christianity back into a sounder, more Biblical understanding of the basic doctrines of the faith. This was vital to the preservation of the gospel and the spiritual soundness of Christianity. The major teaching emphasis of Evangelical churches is on the meaning of the Bible and its application to our lives. It is a right concern for Biblical orthodoxy. It is important that we be **orthodox** (orthos = straight or right, doxa=opinion) in regards to the Scriptures and their meaning.

However, in the command we call “the Great Commission” Christ is calling us to orthopraxy, right practice. As Jesus would say, **“these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.”** Matthew 23:23 Right doctrine should lead to right practice. And, in His last words on earth, Jesus commands His people to DO what is right so that His redemptive mission on earth not fail to reach all the people for whom He died. It is probably correct to say that most churches of Jesus Christ, all across the world, are not carrying out the Great Commission in their communities and beyond in the way or measure that Jesus wants. Much of this is due to ignorance about the practical meaning of the Great Commission. And much of it is due to a lack of practical training in HOW to carry it out. Most Christians neither understand how the Great Commission refers to them nor do they know how to practice it successfully in their world.

Class Comments: In the class’s experience, where have they seen most emphasis in Evangelical churches – in right beliefs or in right practice? Explain your answers.

This study is just one part of training in a practical strategy for helping churches and their members become powerful missionary forces at home and on other mission fields as well. Your study of this series of lessons is an initial part of that training. This is a Great Commission Strategy, built upon the four distinct parts of Christ’s commission seen in Matthew 28:18-20. This is a movement that helps to bring churches to their feet and to begin to march out into their community and beyond, making disciples everywhere they go.

Jesus clearly envisions training to DO what He commands as a continuous effort of the churches. He said that the great need of the harvest fields is more laborers. These should not be enlisted and trained only from time to time. Rather, this effort must be continuous. New Christians need to be quickly enlisted in such training efforts, because they are just now deciding what they are to do as believers. Older Christians may be more difficult to enlist, but many of them have long sensed God’s missionary call on their lives, but have not known how to begin.

There are four ways that the every Church on the March can train people to fulfill the Great Commission:

Show the Way. The most natural way to learn to serve is to watch others who are serving. Jesus knew this well, and invited others simply to follow Him. As they followed, they saw how He spoke and ministered to others. If you, as a Christian worker will multiply your ministry through the lives of others, pray that God will lead you to the person or persons who will be your disciple-workers, and invite them to go with you in your times of ministry. Always have one or more personal disciples who will accompany you in your ministry. Have one person whom you train constantly to take your place in ministry. Little by little, give your disciples responsibilities that will give you more freedom. Then, invite them to do what you are doing, and you will observe and support them in their ministry. Finally, you will help them to minister separately from you. When you do that, tell them that they must quickly take someone else with them who will learn just as they have learned. This is not a new idea! Listen to Paul’s orders to Timothy: ***The things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others.*** 2 Timothy 2:2



Comments: What teaching method does a carpenter use to teach an apprentice? Why is this same method so important in training Christian workers?

Team learning. A very important aspect of the work of a Church on the March is the creation of “Rocks.” These are the basic building blocks of a real Church on the March. They received their inspiration from Jesus who created the first Rock when He called twelve men to join together and follow Him. A Rock is a group of up to twelve people in the church who pray, meet and work together to make disciples of the people in the world. A Rock needs to meet one time each week for a time of prayer together and to talk about the ministries they are engaged in. They invite others to join the Rock and to let the members of the Rock show them how to minister and to find ministries of their own.

Rather than needing to meet another night of the week, it is often convenient for the Rock to meet with the church on prayer meeting night. After taking part in the early part of the service with others, the Rock goes to a separate room where they pray as a group. In the Rock meetings, workers may mention needs they have for other workers, and the group should pray, talk and think together about people they might invite to accept these opportunities. They converse about opportunities and about challenges that need to be met, and encourage one another to minister more effectively. Each Rock needs a wise and experienced leader, approved by the pastor of the church.

In our churches, we may give much effort to verbally encourage Christians to enter into practical outreach ministries. However, most Christians will not actually do so unless they are a member of a small group that is constantly talking, praying, and working on efforts to reach the lost for Christ. “Rocks” are not a usual part of Christian churches, although they were Christ's method. That may explain why Christian churches are so ineffective in moving their members to labor out in the immediate mission field of the church. The series of studies entitled “**The Church on the March**” gives much practical guidance in how to create and use Rocks in a Baptist church.

Comments: Do any of the students have any experience with an organization similar to a Rock, or to Jesus' formation of his group of twelve disciple-apostles? What does this reveal about our Evangelical church organization?



Receive missionary certification. You are about to conclude the first of three studies that will earn “Missionary Certification.” Persons receiving this certification should be able to have a powerful ministry in their own community and know how to fulfill the Great Commission, in a practical way, anywhere else in the world. The study you are concluding should reframe your understanding of how Christ proposes to win and change the lost world. It is the foundation of everything that follows. The methods you will learn in the next set of lessons, called “**Your Little Flock Ministry**” are not traditional evangelistic methods. They are methods that come straight out of the New Testament and were taught and practiced by your Lord. Being His methods, you will find them to be very successful. They are remarkably simple and, as you might expect, their greatest requirements for success are faith in the Lord and a good measure of His love in your heart for the people. These are spiritual requirements, much more than technical knowledge. Having the spiritual requirements, you will find the methodology to be simple and of great blessing to you and also to those to whom God will send you as His missionary.

Many of those who earn their missionary certification will want to get more training still. All missionary trainees are welcome to become students in the Baptist International Missionary Institute. It has a curriculum covering 120 hours of study. The sixteen hours of your certification training, however, are the first part of the curriculum, so you will complete your “Diploma of Missionary Training” in just 104 additional hours.

Comments: What value has this series of studies been to the students personally? What abilities do they hope to have by the time they finish earning their “Missionary Certification?”

Missionary Institute. The Church on the March is unique in its growth and multiplication through the ministry of its missionary institute. Called “the Baptist International Missionary Institute,” it may bear another name such as “the Great Commission Institute” or, as in Viet Nam, “the Vietnamese Missionary Institute.” In prisons, it is called “the Philippi Missionary Institute.” Whatever name is used, the institute trains effective missionaries in a program that normally requires 120 class periods of one hour each. Its courses cover many aspects of missionary ministry and Christian service, as well as Biblical and doctrinal courses. It is called a “missionary institute” because its purpose is to attract those who feel led to serve Christ to reach people and communities for Christ.

The institute has many courses similar to those offered by seminaries for missionary training, but without examinations and grades. Its students are evaluated by their ministries and not by examinations. Men, women and young people come together to learn to be missionaries in their own communities and, if God so leads, to other communities that awaits their ministries.

Initially, a missionary institute may be established for members of several churches in a region. In time, the ideal is for every church to have its own missionary institute, training many of its members to reach out into the lost community for Christ and to start missionary work of the church in other communities. The institute may set its own schedule for classes. Typically, it will meet for from 90 minutes to two hours each week. If summer vacations are taken, it may take up to two years to complete the program. A certificate of study is awarded after 60 hours of study and a certificate of missionary preparation is given upon completing all of the courses.

Missionary institutes are not a substitute for seminary training—either in extension centers or permanent seminary facilities. However, they will attract many men and women who have great potential abilities as missionary workers who would not attend a more formal seminary program. Those who might go on to these will be among the best of the students, bringing experience and spiritual motivation to any seminary program.

Comments: Your group of students is now participating in the first studies of a missionary institute. What importance do they sense this institute might have for their personal lives, for their congregations and for the lost communities awaiting Christian missionaries?

The Great Commission is based on a constant and growing teaching ministry. First it calls for teaching the lost about Christ and the gospel, then teaching Christians to grow in faith and spiritual wisdom even as they are becoming missionaries of Christ and His church. The Great Commission is the basis of the greatest revolution the world has ever known. It is a revolution that brings life and not death. It moves by the power of love and not hate. It is a revolution that gives new life to those it touches, changing lives, families and whole nations for the better. This helps us to understand why the words of the Great Commission were the last words of our Lord Jesus Christ upon this earth. Let us live out this Commission with dedication and in the great power of His presence.

