



6

The Great Commission

Key Theme

- God reconciles sinners to Himself through the gospel of Christ.

Key Passages

- Matthew 28:18–20; Romans 1:16–17, 10:14–17

Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Explain the purpose of the Great Commission.
- Describe who is responsible for fulfilling the Great Commission.



Lesson Overview



Come On In

Write on the board, “Are you obeying the Great Commission?”



Studying God’s Word

Jesus’s last command to His followers was that they preach the gospel and make disciples of all nations. All believers share in that same responsibility and are called to go to all nations with the gospel of truth. This is important because the gospel is the good news, and it alone can bring eternal life.

Study the Prepare to Share section.

Go Before the Throne.



Activity: Whose Commission?

Students will examine passages of Scripture that explain who is responsible for carrying out the Great Commission.

Student Guides

Pencils



Activity: Truth Be Told Review Game (Optional)

The students will review the lesson by playing a board game.

Truth Be Told Game Board and Answer Key

Game pieces for each team

Truth Be Told Question and Number Cards

Poster putty



Prepare to Share

SCRIPTURAL BACKGROUND

Prepare to teach by preparing your heart. Read the key passages listed above with this background.

Jesus Christ was delivered up according to the determined purpose of God. He was crucified, put to death, and then raised from the dead (Acts 2:23–24). Through His Resurrection, Jesus destroyed the final enemy—that is death (1 Corinthians 15:26). Now those who believe in Him shall never die (John 11:26).

Jesus appeared to His followers after His Resurrection. In fact, the Bible records no less than ten times that Jesus was seen after He rose. He showed Himself alive by many infallible proofs (Acts 1:3). The Apostle Paul summarized some of these appearances when He wrote that Jesus was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve, then by over 500 hundred, then by James, and then by all the apostles (1 Corinthians 15:3–7).

For 40 days Jesus continued to show Himself, teach, and prepare His followers for life without His physical presence. When it finally came time for Him to return to His Father, He gave His parting instructions. This is what is now known as the Great Commission. What was Jesus's message?

He began by once again confirming His authority—ALL authority has been given to Him in heaven and on earth (Matthew 28:18). He was crucified for claiming He was God (John 10:30–31). And this statement declared His claim to be true! Jesus the Messiah is the Great I AM (John 8:58). He is Lord over the entire universe.

He then told His followers to “make disciples.” This is a call that includes evangelism—proclaiming the gospel to others—as well as teaching and guiding these disciples to observe all that Jesus commanded (Matthew 28:20). And this is a commission to ALL believers through the ages. How critical it is that we obey it. We know that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved (Romans 10:13). But how will anyone call on the Lord if they do not believe in Him? And how will they believe in Him if they have not heard of Him (Romans 10:14)? We must proclaim the truth to unbelievers. The Bible tells us that faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God (Romans 10:17). We are to be bold and not ashamed of the gospel. It is the gospel that is the power of God to salvation for everyone

who believes (Romans 1:16). Without the truth of the gospel, people will perish in their sins.

Jesus told His followers to baptize the disciples in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19.) This external baptism by water is a picture of what happens when a person trusts in Christ. They die with Christ, are buried with Christ, and are raised to newness of life (Romans 6:4).

Scripture also talks about another baptism. This baptism comes through the Holy Spirit to all believers who are united with Christ through faith in the gospel. This is an internal baptism by which the Holy Spirit makes believers new creations in Christ Jesus (2 Corinthians 5:17). It is often referred to as being “born again” by the Holy Spirit (John 3:6–7). This baptism seals believers with the Holy Spirit of promise assuring them that they are guaranteed the inheritance that Christ purchased to the praise of the glory of God (Ephesians 2:13–14)!

And the Great Commission does not stop there! It continues beyond a new believer's repentance and faith. You see, a new Christian is like a newborn—unskilled in the word of righteousness (Hebrews 5:13). There is a new life in their soul, with amazing potential to learn and grow in wisdom and knowledge of the truth. These new believers are to be molded by the truth and trained to do all that Jesus commanded (Matthew 28:20). Those older and more mature in the faith are to instruct the younger Christians so they will continue to grow and bear fruit for the Lord (Titus 2:3; 2 Timothy 2:2).

Jesus ended His Great Commission with a promise that gives the encouragement and strength necessary to boldly fulfill His command. He told His disciples, and He tells us, “Lo! I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” We can be assured and confident of this promise as we strive to fulfill the Great Commission in our own lives.

HISTORICAL/APOLOGETICS BACKGROUND

If you've ever been to a missionary conference, no doubt the Great Commission was read aloud or written on a banner. This is the church's marching orders—to make disciples of all nations. Sometimes we think that this was a new idea that Jesus instituted, when in reality, God's heart has always been for the nations. God's covenant with Israel in the Old Testament wasn't for their

sake alone. No, God had always intended that Israel would be a light to the nations (Isaiah 42:6, 49:6, 60:3). As we look at the Old Testament, there are many clear passages that show this to be true.

As early as Genesis, God's intent to use the nation of Israel as a catalyst to spread His Word to all the world is clear. The judgment for the Tower of Babel scattered people across the earth, and nations were formed. This was followed by God's promise to Abram that through him and his seed "all the families of the earth shall be blessed" (Genesis 12:3). God would use Abraham, the father of Israel, in a way that would be a means of blessing all the nations; from his seed, Jesus Christ would come and provide redemption to the world. This promise of worldwide blessing was later restated to Abraham: "In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice" (Genesis 18:18, 22:18). The same promise was then given to Isaac (Genesis 26:4) and then to Jacob as the father of the 12 tribes of Israel (Genesis 28:14). The world would be blessed through Abraham's seed.

God's desire and heart was not just for Israel. But He would use Israel, and His Word to them, to proclaim truth across the earth. We see in many of the psalms that all nations would be included in the praise and worship of the Lord God of Israel. One in particular is Psalm 67. The universal nature of this psalm proclaims that God's way will be known on ALL the earth and His salvation among ALL nations (Psalm 67:2). The psalmist goes on to plead that ALL the peoples will praise God, that ALL the nations will be glad and sing for joy (Psalm 67:3-4)!

We know that Israel was God's chosen nation. And yet God was jealous for all the peoples of the earth—both Jews and Gentiles—that they would worship His name. It is hard to miss the many Gentiles God spoke of in the Old Testament. These men and women were known to be followers of the one true God of Israel. We encounter people like Melchizedek, the king of Salem (Genesis 14:18); Jethro of Midian, Moses's father-in-law (Exodus 3:1); Rahab, the harlot in Jericho (Joshua 2:1); Ruth of Moab (Ruth 1:4); the widow of Zarephath (1 Kings 17:9); and many others like them. These people from many nations responded to the good news of God's reign. And who can forget God sending Jonah to take the message of repentance to the cruel Assyrians of Nineveh? The people of that pagan city believed God, repented of their sins, and turned to the one, true, holy God (Jonah 3:5-10).

You see, God did not ordain that Israel alone would receive the blessing of salvation through the Messiah. No, God called Israel and put her into service to spread His name to the nations of the earth. The decisive fulfillment of God's covenant with Abraham—that the nations of the earth would be blessed through his seed—was accomplished in the life, death, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ, the "seed of Abraham." God's plan was that through Jesus Christ ALL people—including those from the most pagan nations—can become sons of Abraham and heirs of all his blessings through faith in Jesus Christ.

So when Jesus left His followers with the Great Commission, He was continuing the purpose of His Father that the everlasting gospel would be preached to those who dwell on the earth—to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people—that they would fear God and give Him glory, and that they would forever worship Him who made heaven and earth (Revelation 5:9-10).

Now and always, Christians have the great privilege and the solemn responsibility to take the message of the gospel to the nations of the world. Matthew 28:18-20 is not called the Great Suggestion, but the Great Commission. May we be found faithful.

For more information on this topic, see the Online Resource Page.



BEFORE THE THRONE

Lord Jesus, I praise you. Your name is above all names. You've told us to go and make disciples. How will they know, if we don't tell them? Make us bold, Lord, to speak of you to neighbors and friends. Help us to love others enough to share the truth of the gospel with them. Move in my heart and in the hearts of my students to seek eternal treasures. Keep us from being ashamed or embarrassed of your Word, and make us evangelists to a lost world. Please draw the students in my class to know you through repentance and faith. And then put a fire in them by the power of the Holy Spirit to go into all the world and make disciples. To you be all the glory!

➤ **Pace your lesson!** Use the clocks to mark the time you want to finish each section. This will help you stay on track and finish on time. You may need to shorten or drop sections as necessary.



Review

In our last lesson, we looked at the glorious truths surrounding the Resurrection of our Lord and Savior. We saw that the Bible clearly teaches that His Resurrection was just as important for our salvation as was His death on the Cross. As we think about and talk about the gospel, we need to remember that our redemption and justification are bound up in the perfect life, the wrath-absorbing death, and the bodily Resurrection of Jesus Christ. All of those things are true and necessary in God's plan of salvation.

Next week, we are going to take some time to dig into some of the apologetic aspects of the Resurrection. Many people have tried to explain away the reality of Jesus rising from the dead, so we are going to prepare our minds to respond to some of those challenges, looking to Scripture as our authority.

Today we are going to look at the period after the Resurrection and the compelling words of Jesus to the disciples before He finally ascended to sit at the right hand

of the Father. While none of the Gospels records all of the appearances, each of them gives at least a short description of Jesus appearing to the disciples after He rose from the dead. John gives us the most detail, and we read a portion of that account when we discussed the restoration of Peter a few weeks ago.

While we won't examine this passage in detail, turn to Acts 1 and listen as I read verses 1 to 11. *Read Acts 1:1–11.*

To those Jesus appeared to, He did so in a way that was undeniable—by many infallible proofs He demonstrated that He was alive. This happened at least ten times over a period of forty days. Jesus continued to teach them during this time before His Ascension—when He rose from the earth to heaven in the view of the disciples. But just before Jesus ascended, He left the disciples with several instructions, one of which we are going to



► Write on the board, "Are you obeying the Great Commission?"



Studying God's Word

READ THE WORD

Let's read Matthew 28:18–20 together. *Have someone read the passage aloud.*

EXAMINE THE WORD

Observe the Text

Since this is a familiar passage to many of you, we need to make sure that we slow down and truly examine the text. Some of you may have heard a lot of teaching on this passage over the years. But we want to approach a familiar text like this one with as few preconceived ideas as possible to

make sure that we are listening to the text, not telling the text what we already believe.

- ? **Who does “them” refer to?** *Looking back to verse 16, it is the 11 disciples. This is consistent with the two angels in Acts 1:10–11 referring to them as men of Galilee.*
- ? **How did Jesus appear to them?** *He was in bodily form after His Resurrection.*
- ? **Where did this happen?** *The immediate text indicates it was in Galilee, but Luke gives a different context.*
- ? **Where does Luke 24:50–51 place this event?** *Near the city of Bethany.*
- ? **Where does Acts 1:12 place this event?** *The Mount of Olives, where Bethany is located just east of Jerusalem.*
- ? **What can we conclude about Matthew’s record of the timing of these events?** *Because we know Jesus was with them for forty days before the Ascension into heaven (Acts 1:1–3) and that the Luke and Acts passages place the Ascension in Bethany on the Mount of Olives, Matthew is condensing the time, and there is a gap between verses 17 and 18.*
- ? **What level of authority does Jesus possess?** *He has all authority.*
- ? **How extensive is His authority?** *He has all authority in heaven and earth. This is a figure of speech known as a merism, where the idea is to communicate everything by using the phrase “heaven and earth.”*
- ? **How did He receive this authority?** *It was given to Him.*
- ? **Who gave Him this authority?** *While the text does not say, we understand it to be given by the Father. Passages like Matthew 11:27 and John 3:35 support this.*
- ? **Why were the disciples to “go” (the “therefore” indicates a reason)?** *Jesus was giving them a command based on His authority as Lord.*
- ? **What three things were the disciples commanded to do?** *To make disciples, to baptize, and to teach the disciples all that Jesus had commanded.*
- ? **What idea is implicit in Jesus’s command to “make disciples”?** *In order to make disciples, they had to be told of the message of Jesus (the gospel) and then respond to the message, becoming a follower of the teachings of Jesus. In short, the gospel has to be proclaimed so that people can respond to it. While we often point to this passage as the proof text of evangelism, Jesus never actually tells them what to do to make disciples; we must infer that from this and other passages.*
- ? **Who were to be made disciples?** *People of all nations.*
- ? **What doctrine is clearly communicated in the form of baptism described by Jesus?** *This is a clear statement of the Trinity, naming each of the Persons of the Godhead specifically.*
- ? **What was to be taught to these new disciples?** *All of the things Jesus had taught His disciples.*
- ? **What does the word “observe” mean in this context?** *Rather than “to look at” something, it has the sense of obeying a command. We use this word when we speak of observing a holiday tradition.*

Luke 24:50–51

Acts 1:12

➤ “Commandments” in this verse has the connotation of spoken teachings rather than written laws.

- ? **What promise does Jesus give the disciples?** *He promises them that He will be with them to the end of the age.*
- ? **What does “the end of the age” refer to?** *It refers to the Second Coming.*
- ? **How could Jesus be with the disciples if He was about to ascend into heaven?** *This is an allusion to the coming of the Holy Spirit. Passages like Romans 8:9–11, Philippians 1:19, and Galatians 4:6 connect the Holy Spirit to Christ, and Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit in John 14:15–18, Acts 1:4–6, and other places.*

Discover the Truth

Let’s think about the words we use to describe this event—the Great Commission. The basic idea of the word “commission” is to join the mission of another person. Today, we talk of a military officer being commissioned into service under the authority of the government. That is exactly what Jesus was calling these disciples to do—to come alongside His mission. What was His mission? To seek and save the lost. Jesus lived a perfect life, died upon the Cross, and then rose from the dead. Now the message of that triumph over sin needed to be spread. And we cannot call that anything other than a great task. They were to be witnesses to the people in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and then to the ends of the earth.

- ? **What two attributes of God does Jesus demonstrate in describing His authority and commanding the disciples?** *Refer to the Attributes of God Poster. Sovereignty and omnipotence are demonstrated in His absolute power and authority.*

Go! This was the command of the Lord. What could the disciples do but submit themselves to the call to go and tell everyone about the salvation that Jesus had purchased for sinners in rebellion against their Creator? While it would be a few more days of waiting, the Holy Spirit would come to empower them to carry out this mission, and the gospel would begin to be spread to the ends of the earth.

We typically call this activity of spreading the gospel evangelism from the Greek word *euangelion*, which means “good news.” The disciples were to be evangelists and spread the message of forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ.



SOVEREIGN

OMNIPOTENT



Whose Commission?

MATERIALS

- Student Guides
- Pencils

INSTRUCTIONS

But wait! This command was given to the 11 disciples and possibly some others who may have been with them, so where do we fit in? That is the question I would like you to consider. In your Student Guide you will find the Whose Commission? activity. Work in small groups to answer the questions there based on the passages provided. *Assist the groups as needed.*

CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

- ? 1. Do you believe that you are responsible to spread the good news of the gospel as an evangelist? *Discuss various answers.*
- ? 2. In Matthew 28:18–20, the disciples were commanded to spread the gospel, make disciples, and teach those disciples all that Jesus had taught them. If Jesus taught the disciples to spread the gospel, would the new disciples be responsible for spreading the gospel, too? *This seems to be a natural conclusion; part of being a disciple is to share the message of our Lord and Savior with others.*
- ? 3. In Luke 24:46–48, Jesus addressed the disciples. To whom were they to preach the gospel? Is this possible for this small group of disciples who lived nearly 2,000 years ago? *They were to preach to all nations. So this seems to imply an ongoing effort through more than just these few people.*
- ? 4. In 2 Corinthians 5:18–21, what role do those who have been reconciled in

Christ have? *They are ambassadors for Christ to seek reconciliation between sinners and God, offering others the same hope of salvation they have been given.*

- ? 5. How has your answer to the first question changed in light of these passages? *Discuss various answers. Some may understand that evangelism is a spiritual gift, but there are no passages that support this plainly (Ephesians 4:11 is often used, but this passage seems to be referring to the “office” of an evangelist). Knowing what we have received in Christ should stir our hearts to share that hope and forgiveness with others.*
- ? 6. What hinders you most from being bold as an ambassador of Jesus Christ and His gospel? *Discuss various answers and challenge the students to pray, asking God to remove any fears or doubts that they have (Colossians 4:2–6; Ephesians 6:20). Discuss becoming equipped to share the gospel and various training programs available, offering encouragement rather than guilt or manipulation.*

As we think about the Great Commission, we might think of it as a global game of “Telephone” continuing through the ages. One disciple shares the gospel message and makes another disciple, who makes another, who makes another, and so on as the gospel is spread around the world and throughout time. But it involves much more than just sharing the gospel; it involves uniting believers to the church through baptism and continuing discipleship through the teaching of the Scriptures and fellowship in a local congregation. Whether we do that in our own neighborhoods and workplaces, or we travel to foreign lands, God can use us to gather many to Himself so they may also offer Him the worship He deserves.



READ THE WORD

We are going to examine two passages from the book of Romans to help us understand the importance of spreading the gospel. We will look first at Romans 1:15–17 and then 10:9–17. *Have someone read the passage aloud.*

EXAMINE THE WORD

Observe the Text

Let's examine Romans 1:15–17.

- ? What did Paul want to do for those in Rome? *Preach the gospel to them.*
- ? What is Paul's attitude toward the gospel? *He is not ashamed of it.*
- ? How does Paul describe the gospel? *It is the gospel of Christ.*
- ? What power is found in the gospel of Christ? *God's power to give salvation.*
- ? Who does this power extend to? *It extends to Jews and Greeks, a way of referring to all peoples.*
- ? What is revealed in the gospel? *The righteousness of God.*
- ? What is this righteousness based on? *Faith.*

Now let's move on to chapter 10 where Paul continues to uncover the importance of spreading the gospel. While the immediate context of this passage is Paul speaking of the Israelites, the principles He uses apply to all people as the gospel is proclaimed. We're looking at verses 9–17.

- ? According to this passage, what are the aspects of receiving salvation? *Confessing Jesus as Lord and believing God has raised Him from the dead brings righteousness.*
- ? Who is Jesus Lord over? *Both the Jew and Greek.*
- ? How does God respond to those who "call upon Him"? *He is rich toward them, offering salvation.*
- ? What does this phrase "call upon Him" imply? *This is parallel to confessing Jesus as Lord. While the idea is not explicitly stated here, this involves repenting of sin and trusting that Jesus has paid the penalty for those sins and was raised to life (see Mark 1:15; Acts 3:19, 20:21).*
- ? What must happen before someone can call on the Lord for salvation? *They must believe in Him.*
- ? What must happen before someone can believe in the Lord? *They must hear about Him.*
- ? What must happen for someone to hear of the Lord's salvation? *A preacher must deliver the message.*
- ? What must happen for the preacher to tell of the Lord's salvation? *He must be sent.*
- ? How does this passage describe those who preach the gospel? *They have beautiful feet.*

- ? **How is the gospel described in verse 15?** *The gospel of peace (between man and God).*
- ? **How do people respond to the gospel?** *They either obey or disobey the preaching of the gospel.*
- ? **What does the fact that not all have obeyed the gospel imply about the gospel message?** *More than just an offer of salvation, it is a command. You cannot disobey an offer or a suggestion.*
- ? **How does Acts 17:30–31 affirm this interpretation?** *Paul stated clearly that God commands all men everywhere to repent or face judgment. Remind the students of the principle of letting Scripture interpret Scripture rather than allowing outside ideas influence our interpretation.*
- ? **Back in Romans 10:17, how does faith come to unbelievers?** *Faith comes by hearing the word of God. Many translations (based on manuscript variations) use “word of Christ” in this passage rather than “word of God.”*
- ? **What does “the word of God” refer to?** *Whether we use the variant of “word of Christ” or not, this phrase is not a synonym for the Bible, as some assert. While the Bible is the Word of God, the Greek word for “Word” here is rhema—referring to a spoken word. The immediate context of this passage indicates that here the phrase refers to the message of the gospel of Christ that Paul has just been talking about from verse 9, making “word of Christ” a preferred rendering. However, it is in the Bible that we find the revealed message of the gospel of Christ.*

Acts 17:30–31

Discover the Truth

Paul makes the importance of the proclamation of the gospel very clear. Without the preaching of the gospel, no one can believe in Christ, receive salvation, and become reconciled to God. And proclamation cannot happen without someone proclaiming that truth.

In our modern context, the word “preacher” has a very specific connotation of a man standing behind a pulpit delivering a sermon. But the Greek word root used for “preach” and “preacher” is *kerysso*, which has the meaning of delivering a message with authority. Think of a herald—someone who is sent in the name of a king to deliver a message to his subjects. Or a more contemporary example would be a spokesperson announcing some new technological device that will change your life. From that initial proclamation, the message spreads, and those who believe in the message spread it further and then stand in a line for 18 hours to get the new device.

While translated differently, it is the same word used in Mark 7:36 where the man healed by Jesus (and those around him) “proclaimed” what Jesus had done. They had just witnessed a miracle of healing, and they could not help but proclaim that good news to those around them.

If we have been raised from dead in our sins to alive in Christ, a true miracle made possible only through Christ, how could we do anything but proclaim that to everyone around us?

Not every one of us will stand before crowds on a stage. Not every one of us will stand on a park bench before a crowd. Not every one of us will

stand behind a pulpit. Not everyone will travel to a foreign country to live among the people there. But every one of us has the distinct privilege of sharing the good news—that King Jesus offers terms of peace with those who are in rebellion against Him—declaring the same news that saved us from our just condemnation and brought us eternal life.



Truth Be Told Review Game (Optional)

MATERIALS

- Truth Be Told Game Board
- Truth Be Told Question Cards
- Truth Be Told Question Answer Key
- Truth Be Told Number Cards (or game spinner or dice)
- Buttons or other small items as game pieces for each team
- Poster putty

INSTRUCTIONS

Divide your class into teams. Teams will take turns drawing a Truth Be Told Question Card. Team members will take turns answering the questions. They will quickly determine an answer and give it. If they are correct, they will draw a Truth Be Told Number Card and move that number of spaces on the game board. As play proceeds, follow the directions on the game board. Alternate between teams as long as time permits.

We are going to review now by playing “Truth Be Told.” I’ll put you into teams.

Teams will take turns picking a question card and answering the question. If the answer is correct, you will draw a number card and move your game piece that many spaces. All directions on the board must be followed.

Return the used cards to the stacks. *Answers to the questions are provided on the Truth Be Told Question Answer Key on the Resource DVD-ROM.*

CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

Jesus left His followers with one last important command. He wanted them to spread the good news of the gospel to all of the world, teaching others all He had taught them. Jesus wanted them to proclaim the gospel, so others would believe, call on His name, and have eternal life.



Applying God’s Word

WHAT YOU HEARD IN THE WORD

While there is no passage of Scripture that says, “Every Christian must share the gospel with 12 people each week,” the call to the disciples echoes down to us nearly 2,000 years after Jesus delivered the commission to “Go.” And not only to us, but to all of those who have been a part of the church throughout history and around the globe. And this was also the case all through Scripture as the faithful looked for the coming of the Seed who would crush the head of the serpent and be a blessing to all nations.

Within the gospel message, there is more than just the offer of salvation to those who are dead in their sins. To those who have been raised to new life in Christ, it offers the hope of empowerment to live a life pleasing to God. The gospel isn't just for making disciples but for disciples of Christ to live in and walk in each day. For the unbeliever, the gospel is the good news that his sins can be forgiven. For the believer, the gospel is the good news that he has been forgiven in Christ and that the Spirit now lives in him to keep him from sin and to change him into the image of Christ. The gospel is central to making disciples AND continuing in discipleship.

It is both a responsibility and a privilege to make disciples and to teach them all Jesus commanded. Further, it is a demonstration of our love for the Savior who redeemed us. But it is ultimately the opportunity to be used by God to call people to offer Him the worship and praise that He is due as the Creator and Sustainer of the universe.

Let's all pray for boldness as we hang out with friends, interact with people at school, go down the hall in our own home, go across the street, go to the park, or go to another nation to proclaim the glorious good news that Jesus saves sinners from the wrath of God against their sin. And then let's teach them to obey the commands of their Savior.

GOD'S WORD IN THE REAL WORLD

- ? **How would the world be different if the Great Commission had not been carried on by the generation that followed the original 12 disciples?** *If those who had heard and responded to the gospel had not followed through by telling and teaching others, Christianity would have died within a generation. But that was not what God intended, and there were many obedient saints who spread the gospel to the ends of the earth.*
- ? **In what ways has your thinking about the responsibility of evangelism changed over time, and what influenced that thinking?** *Discuss various answers, offering encouragement to those who are timid about sharing the gospel.*
- ? **We have all had fears about sharing the gospel with others. How can we overcome these fears and seek to be obedient as witnesses of Jesus?** *Responses of fear are indicators that we are walking in the flesh and not in the Spirit. However, even those sins that come from our own fear of man have been forgiven in Christ. Some passages to consider about fear include 2 Timothy 1:7–12 and Proverbs 29:25–26. We should be seeking to encourage one another in fellowship and in prayer as the church in Jerusalem did in Acts 4:23–31. Additionally, some are afraid they will not be able to answer certain questions, but we can become equipped to do so.*
- ? **Have you ever found a new recipe or a new app that you just loved and had to tell everyone about? How does this example relate to our proclamation of the gospel?** *Use this question to provoke thought, not as a guilt trip or a club. Our answer to this question might reveal that we have lost passion about what Jesus has done for us.*
- ? **What should be the supreme motivator in fulfilling the Great Commission?** *There are many biblically sound reasons: obedience, love for Christ, to prevent*

suffering, thankfulness, etc. However, passages like Revelation 4:9–11 and 5:8–14 point to the ultimate reason: that Jesus would receive the worship He deserves for giving Himself as a sacrifice.

? **How could adopting the following phrase encourage us to obey the Great Commission: “I am responsible to proclaim the good news, not for the response of the people hearing it”?** *We know that it is the work of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of men that brings conviction of sin and regeneration (John 1:12–13, 3:5–8, 16:7–11). God has called us to proclaim the message, not change the heart. Regardless of the outcome, we can trust that He is pleased with us as we share the gospel with others, modeling the grace and truth that characterized Jesus.*

? **What are some practical ways we can share the gospel and make disciples?** *Discuss various ways to share the gospel, such as relationships, programs, ministries, social media, street evangelism, etc.*



MEMORY VERSE

Matthew 28:18–20 And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen.



GROUP PRAYER TIME

Be sure to pray with your class before you dismiss them.

- Thank God for His gift of salvation made possible in Christ’s life, death, and Resurrection.
- Praise God for His power and wisdom to bring about salvation for those who rebel against Him.
- Ask God for boldness to open our mouths and proclaim the gospel.