



STUDY GUIDE

INTRODUCTION to LIFE AS MISSION

It has been our experience that our Center Groups don't need a lot of questions to fill 90-minutes of discussion. (And if this is read aloud, I could almost imagine there might be some discussion about that first sentence before you even get to the next line.) With that being said, this Study Guide has less questions for each session than in the past. (If you finish early, you can always pray longer together.)

The purpose of this series is that each member of the body of Christ at Center Church would participate in the Great Commission. To help facilitate this goal, at the end of each session there is a **Great Commission Action Step** for members of the small group to engage in that week. (Though, the entire church will be challenged to participate in these Action Steps at the close of each sermon.)

As has become the practice in our groups, at the end of each week there is a segment of prayer for the church and those we're trying to reach. After spending some time praying together as a body for the mission of the church, take some time to pray for one another. By way of reminder, always begin your prayer times with God's agenda and not each others. (One of the sessions will review this.)

My greatest encouragement to you would be to attend your Center Group as regularly as possible. You may be surprised by how much fruit your consistency in attending will yield, especially if you take the Action Steps to heart.

I hope you find this series an exciting challenge!

Pastor Thor



FULFILLING THE MISSION

WEEK 1

John 17:17-19

Below you will find your greatest challenge in this 12 week series. Thankfully, you'll have 12 weeks to complete this challenge, but complete it weekly, little by little. If you can fill it out in one fell swoop, that's fine too. Just don't wait until week-12 to complete this task. (Take a few minutes and discuss together how many people you initially listed, if any.)

Make a list of seven people you know in the area who aren't Christians or are only culturally Christian:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____

This will be known as your LIST OF SEVEN. You will begin each week reviewing your lists together for both encouragement and accountability. (If you're having trouble filling out your list, we'll have some suggestions as the study progresses.)

1. Let's not assume anything. Take a few minutes to discuss the idea of someone being "culturally Christian." How would you define that term?

Mark 16:15

15 And he said to them, "Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation."

2. It's interesting that the church at large is not more troubled by how many Christians simply ignore one of the primary commands Jesus gave His followers. Has this been troubling to you? Why or why not? (It's okay to be honest, we're covered by the gospel.)

4. Answer "true" (T), "false" (F), or "uncertain" (U) about each of these statements.

- _____ I tell others about Jesus often.
_____ I am so amazed at Jesus that I am ready to go anywhere to tell others about him.
_____ I have lost my wonder about Jesus.

Let's discuss a question that was asked in Sunday's sermon: Do you regularly have conversations about the greatest danger people face in this life — gaining the world, material goods and success and happiness — but losing their soul? Discuss the last gospel conversation you had with someone.

John 17:17-19

¹⁷ Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. ¹⁸ As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. ¹⁹ And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth.

5. The big idea Sunday was that our sanctification (our growing relationship with Jesus Christ) is tied to our work of evangelism. Have you seen your concern for evangelism grow as your relationship with Christ has grown? In what ways? And if not, why do you think that is?

6. What is your greatest fear about evangelism?

7. Consider this quote (and discuss): "I struggle with evangelism. I've learned a lot from Campus Crusade's founder and president Bill Bright's book *Witnessing Without Fear*. But in my library, because of its title, I shelve that book under Fiction. I can't remember ever witnessing without fear. And for that reason, I believe God uses me in encouraging fellow reluctant evangelists with the task of proclaiming good news when we'd all rather put in earbuds and listen to podcasts." (Newman, Randy. *Unlikely Converts: Improbable Stories of Faith and What They Teach Us About Evangelism*. Kregel Publications)

GC ACTION STEP FOR THIS WEEK: Think of a believer (or a cultural Christian) who has stopped attending church. Lovingly seek to invite him or her to fellowship again with God's people. (Lawless, Chuck. *Nobodies for Jesus: 14 Days Toward a Great Commission Lifestyle* - p. 44. Rainer Publishing. Kindle Edition.)

PRAYER FOR THE MISSION:

- Pray that the Lord would remind us of lapsed believers or lead us to believers who no longer attend church this week.
- Pray that we would each find our LIST OF SEVEN.



POWER FOR MISSION

WEEK 2

1. Review your LIST OF SEVEN and discuss how you're doing. Any new additions? Any new possibilities? Any strategies on how to meet some new people?
2. How did everyone do on last week's GC Action Step?

Acts 1:8

⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem

3. What has your experience been with the power of the Holy Spirit in sharing the gospel? Can you think of any incidents where the power of the Spirit was with you in an obvious way while you shared the gospel?

4. What about the power of the Spirit's working in hindsight? Have you ever had an experience where afterward you recognized the Holy Spirit was at work? Explain.

Ephesians 3:20

²⁰ Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us,

5. Just for fun, make a list (by subject) of what you would consider a God-centered prayer format:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Now wasn't that fun?

6. It has been said: "The first key for the average church to reproduce is mental. We must die to the belief—stated or assumed—that our normal churches are inferior to a few megachurches and their prominent pastors." Being part of a small local church, what has your mindset been in this regard? Explain.

Review the Prayer Seder (Order) below and then answer the questions at the end together.

1. Focus on God

- Who he is
- What he can do
- His presence
- Getting his perspective
- Hearing his voice
- This can be music, Scripture or testimony that focuses our minds on some aspect of God

2. Respond from the heart - sentence prayers

- Thanksgiving
- Conviction of sin
- Increased faith
- Repentance
- Dependence on God
- Praise

3. Seek first the kingdom

- Pray for one another's spiritual walk
- Pray for the backslidden
- Pray for the lost
- Pray for missions
- Pray for revival
- Pray for children's ministry
- Pray for youth

4. Present your requests

- Sick
- Financial
- Jobs
- Other personal concerns

5. Close in celebration

- Thanksgiving
- Proclamation
- Praise
- Declaration

7. How has your Center Group been at prayer time? Has the ordered format become second nature yet or do you still struggle as a group? What might help in overcoming this? Or if you've been doing relatively well as a group, what aspect do you think you could focus on more going forward?

GC ACTION STEP FOR THIS WEEK: Watch and listen for people whose hurting lives are in need of prayer. Be courageous enough to ask them if you might pray for them, and record their name for your prayer list (use your cell or a notepad). Make plans to keep in touch with them. (Lawless, Chuck. *Nobodies for Jesus: 14 Days Toward a Great Commission Lifestyle* - p. 32. Rainer Publishing. Kindle Edition.)

PRAYER FOR THE MISSION:

- Pray that the Lord would lead us to hurting people this week.
- Pray that we would be able to exchange information with someone that we pray for this week.



AUTHORITY FOR MISSION

WEEK 3

1. Review your LIST OF SEVEN and discuss how you're doing. (The person with the least number of people on their LIST OF SEVEN has to bring a pie for the group next week.)
2. How did everyone do on last week's GC Action Step?

Matthew 28:18-19

¹⁸ And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations,

3. If you were to disciple someone, what is the first thing you would cover? (Or if you have discipled someone, what did you begin with?)

Romans 1:16

16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

- 4. The fact that the gospel is the power of God should free us from the inclination of trying to win an argument when we're discussing the gospel with an unbeliever. Why do you think that is?**

- 5. Has that been your experience? If not, what do you think the issue is?**

Matthew 28:20

And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

6. List four things that make you cynical about sharing the gospel. Can you come up with four verses that overcome your cynicism?

	4 Things You're Cynical About	4 Verses to Overcome the Cynicism
1		
2		
3		
4		

GC ACTION STEP FOR THIS WEEK: If you have little contact with unbelievers, think of something you enjoy, some activity, some hobby, etc. and see if there is a community organization you could join where others hold those same interests and meet regularly. (Oh, yeah. Then join the group.)

PRAYER FOR THE MISSION:

- Pray that the Lord would guide us in the above endeavor.
- Pray that we would have greater confidence in the power of the gospel.



PEOPLE ON MISSION

WEEK 4

1. Review your LIST OF SEVEN and discuss how you're doing. (The person with the most people on their list gets a \$10 Starbucks gift card this week. If there's a tie, figure out a day to have coffee together.)
2. How did everyone do on last week's GC Action Step?

2 Corinthians 5:20

²⁰ Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

- 3. People tend to come to faith gradually through contact with many different believers. In other words, people tend to come to faith communally. Has this been your view evangelism? Why or why not?**

- 4. If you can, list a few of the people God used as He slowly moved you toward faith in Christ and then discuss their impact on your life:**

Colossians 1:6

⁶ (the gospel) which has come to you, as indeed in the whole world it is bearing fruit and increasing—as it also does among you, since the day you heard it and understood the grace of God in truth,

5. In the above verse, Paul says the gospel is still bearing fruit in the lives of Christians even after they've come to faith in Christ. In what ways do you still find the gospel amazing?

6. In what ways has the gospel become lackluster to you?

7. What are some ways you can overcome this?

GC ACTION STEP FOR THIS WEEK: Pick one aspect of the gospel that you find amazingly compelling (that God would forgive someone like you, that you will never taste death, etc.) and use that fact as motivation to do something good for someone else this week – but do it anonymously.

PRAYER FOR THE MISSION:

- Pray that somehow our acts of kindness will later open a door to sharing the gospel.
- Pray that we would all find the gospel so compelling that it would move us toward acts of kindness toward others.



MESSAGE OF THE MISSION

WEEK 5

1 Corinthians 2:1-10

1. Review your LIST OF SEVEN and discuss how you're doing. (Talk about the last stranger you met and how that interaction went.)
2. How did everyone do on last week's GC Action Step?

“The Mission of God exists because worship doesn't exist everywhere in the world.”

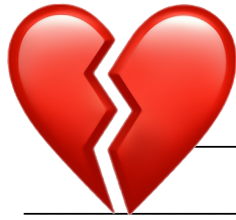
3. What motives have inspired you to share the gospel? Discuss.

Romans 10:13-14

¹³ For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” ¹⁴ How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard?

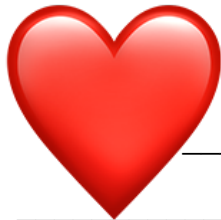
4. Review time: See if you can give a sentence or so about each gospel emoji.













5. How did you do? What was your strongest point? How about your weakest?

John 15:16

““You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you.””

6. How does it strike you that you've been appointed to bear fruit? Reflect on how God has bore fruit in your life up to this point. Can you list some ways?

GC ACTION STEP FOR THIS WEEK: Brush up on the emoji that was your weakest point of the gospel because you'll be sharing it with the group next week.

For bonus discussion: Discuss your weakest emoji point. Does the group have a common weak point or do they vary?

PRAYER FOR THE MISSION:

- Pray that the Lord would increase our faith in sharing the gospel.
- Pray that the Lord would grant us encouragement in sharing the gospel in our daily lives this week.
- Pray that the Lord would give us boldness to share our faith with people we meet this week.
- Pray that the Lord would fill us with His Spirit that we might have the right words to say and the confidence to speak when the opportunity arises.



PRIORITY OF THE MISSION

WEEK 6

Matthew 4:17-25

1. Review your LIST OF SEVEN and discuss how you're doing. (Who was the latest person someone added to their LIST OF SEVEN? How did that come about?)
2. Explain which gospel emoji was your weakest point. Now (without the aid of a cheatsheet) share that point with the group the way you would share it with someone who doesn't know Christ.

Matthew 4:17

17 From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

3. Has making disciples been a priority of your life? If not, why do you think that is?

Matthew 4:19

19 And he said to them, “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.”

4. What might Jesus say to you using your occupation as an example of making the gospel known? “Follow me, and I will make you _____.”
(Note: Stay-at-home mom is an occupation.)

Matthew 6:33

33 But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

5. Where does the kingdom of God fit for you in terms of the priorities of your life? How does your life display kingdom priorities?

6. How does your life deny kingdom priorities?

GC ACTION STEP FOR THIS WEEK: Surprise employees of local businesses with a small gift such as a basket of candy or some gift cards or something along those lines. Bring in one package to be shared by store employees and leave a card that reads something like, "We appreciate how you serve the community with your business, and we wanted to share God's love in a practical way." (Be sure you give items only to employees, so they don't think you are "soliciting" their customers.)

PRAYER FOR THE MISSION:

- Pray that the Lord would lead us to the right businesses and open the hearts of the employees and owners, etc.



PRAYER FOR THE MISSION

WEEK 7

1 Timothy 2:1-6

1. Review your LIST OF SEVEN and discuss how you're doing. (Has anyone been in contact with their LIST regularly by texting, email or meeting at Starbucks?)
2. How did everyone do on last week's GC Action Step?

1 Timothy 2:1-6

2 First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people,

- 3. Do you have a testimony of answered prayer for someone that you have prayed for? Share.**

- 4. In His good providence, God has decided to use our prayers as part of the way in which He brings people to a knowledge of the truth. Is this a truth you have taken to heart? If it hasn't been, why do you think that is?**

“Prayer for people paves the way for the gospel in their lives.”

5. Do you know of anyone who was praying for you before you came to know Christ? Explain.

Romans 8:34

34 Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.

6. What has been your greatest struggle with prayer? Explain.

7. Discuss salvation as a process with this suggested pattern:

- "from distrust to trust"
- "from complacent to curious"
- "from being closed to change to being open to change in their life"
- "from meandering to seeking"
- "to the need of crossing the threshold of the kingdom itself"

8. Where do you think some on your LIST OF SEVEN are in this process?

GC ACTION STEP FOR THIS WEEK: Discuss some of your own ideas for a Great Commission Action Step. Maybe you've doing something or you're thinking about doing something. Either way, come up with this week's GC Action Step together.

For bonus discussion: It's a wonderful picture to know that Jesus is attending to our prayers, to bring us into God's throne room where He can clothe us with power so that our prayers can fall upon those we are praying for with God's blessing and God's answer. Has this been your

view of prayer? Explain. Prayer is part of the process of someone coming to know Christ. Discuss salvation as a process.

PRAYER FOR THE MISSION:

- Pray that the Lord would help us accomplish our Action Step this week.
- Pray that we would be patient with those who are in process as the Father draws them to His Son.



Hindrances to the Mission

WEEK 8

2 Timothy 1:7-12

1. Review your LIST OF SEVEN and discuss how you're doing. (How does it make you feel when you add someone to your LIST?)
2. How did everyone do on last week's GC Action Step?
3. **See if you can remember the three hindrances to the mission from Sunday's sermon:**

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____

4. **Can you think of three other hindrances?**

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____

2 Corinthians 5:14

¹⁴ For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died;

5. Is there an aspect of your attitude toward unbelievers that is unloving? If so, why do you think that is?

6. What are some ways you might overcome this attitude?

7. In your conversations with unbelievers do you tend to ask questions and listen carefully or do you tend to focus on arguing your point. Explain.

GC ACTION STEP FOR THIS WEEK: Do something nice this week for an unbeliever you know and leave it at that – you simply did something nice for him or her. No strings attached.

For bonus discussion: Brainstorm with each other about nice things to do for unbelievers you know.

PRAYER FOR THE MISSION:

- Pray that the Lord would open up some an opportunity this week for us to do something kind for an unbeliever we know.
- Pray that our attitudes and actions would be more loving toward all people this coming week.



THE JOY OF THE MISSION

WEEK 9

1 John 1:1-8

1. Review your LIST OF SEVEN and discuss how you're doing. (What's your greatest strength when it comes to meeting new people?)
2. How did everyone do on last week's GC Action Step?

1 John 1:3-4

³ that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with

the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. ⁴ And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.

3. How has the gospel improved your own relationships? Explain.

1 John 1:7

⁷ But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.

4. If the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin, why do we often struggle with forgiving someone who has wronged us? Explain.

5. If the joy of Christian fellowship is based upon walking honestly before God, others and yourself, how are you doing in this area?

GC ACTION STEP FOR THIS WEEK: Look for an opportunity this week to tell a nonbeliever how the gospel has improved a relationship of yours.

For bonus discussion: When it come to relationships with people “a certain amount of trust can pave the way for better gospel conversations... But I fear that many of us, myself included, wait too long or demand too high a level of trust (which, by the way, is impossible to

measure) before broaching the Jesus topic. By all means, let's pursue friendship, kindness, and trust. But let us also rely on the self-authenticating power of our message. Perhaps we should assume that God's word has already earned the right to be heard because of whose word it is!" (Newman, Randy. *Unlikely Converts: Improbable Stories of Faith and What They Teach Us About Evangelism*. Kregel Publications.)

How have you struggled with 'when's the right time' to bring up the topic of Jesus in a relationship with an unbeliever?

PRAYER FOR THE MISSION:

- Pray that the Lord would give us opportunities this week to discuss our relationships with someone who doesn't know Christ.



THE URGENCY OF THE MISSION

WEEK 10

2 Peter 3:9-10

1. Review your LIST OF SEVEN and discuss how you're doing. (Which person on your list seems most open to the gospel?)
2. How did everyone do on last week's GC Action Step?

2 Peter 3:9-10

⁹ The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that

any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.

3. If God fulfills His promises in His timing, have you struggled with His timing? In what way?

4. This letter by the Apostle Peter was written to believers. What then do you suppose he meant when he wrote to believers that God is “patient toward you, not wishing any to perish?” Explain.

5. How has your urgency been in making Christ known?

6. What are some reasons the church might lack the urgency it needs?

GC ACTION STEP FOR THIS WEEK: It has been said that the gospel is summons. It calls people to repent and believe. Seek an opportunity this week where you not only share the gospel, but tell someone what they must do in response to it – repent and believe.

For bonus discussion: “We’re not merely trying to convince people that our gospel is true, but that our God is good.” Clark, Elliot. *Evangelism as Exiles: Life on Mission as Strangers in Our Own Land*. TGC Publishers.)

Discuss this statement. Which way have you leaned?

PRAYER FOR THE MISSION:

- Pray that the Lord would provide the opportunity this week for you to speak of Christ to someone and call for a response.



THE INVITATION OF THE MISSION

WEEK 11

John 1:43-50

1. Review your LIST OF SEVEN and discuss how you're doing. (Take a few minutes and pray over your lists together.)
2. How did everyone do on last week's GC Action Step?
3. **When people were asked, "How did you end up attending your church?" Here's how they responded:**
 - 6-8% walked in on their own initiative.
 - 2-3% liked the programs.
 - 8-10% liked the pastor.
 - 3-4% had a need.
 - 1-2% were personally evangelized.
 - 3-4% were attracted by Sunday School.
 - 70-80% were invited by relative or friend.

What did you find most surprising on the above list? Why?

4. Was there anything on the list that you found hard to believe? Explain.

Read the story of Nathaniel meeting Jesus in John 1:43-50 (if you haven't already).

5. Once Nathanael believed, Jesus gave him a gentle rebuke regarding his skepticism. Do you fail to invite people to church because you don't believe Jesus will do anything? Explain.

6. How inviting do you think we are as a church? Explain.

7. Based on this common list of fears as to why we don't invite more people to church, comment on the ones most common to you:

"MY WORLDS OF WORK AND CHURCH WOULD COLLIDE."

"IT COULD RISK OUR RELATIONSHIP."

"IT'S TOO FOREIGN TO THEM."

"THEY WOULDN'T BELONG."

8. If you've invited someone to church in the last eleven weeks, share with the group how that step worked out for you and the person you invited.

9. If your most common reason for not inviting people to church is “I don’t know any nonChristians” — what steps have in taken in the last eleven weeks to resolve that?

GC ACTION STEP FOR THIS WEEK: This coming Sunday, practice this acronym: **LINE-UP**

- LOOK for someone new.
- INTRODUCE yourself.
- NEVER sit alone. (Invite your new friend to sit with you.)
- ENGAGE in conversation after the service.
- USE “Breakfast with the Pastor” to invite people to get to know the church leadership.
- PRACTICE the 3/10 rule: talk to 3 people you don’t know for the first 10 minutes after the service. Your friends will still be there when these 10 minutes are up, but newcomers leave quickly, so engage with them first.

PRAYER FOR THE MISSION:

- Pray that the Lord would give us grace to be truly inviting and friendly toward newcomers.



THE LIGHT OF THE MISSION

WEEK 12

John 8:12

1. Review your LIST OF SEVEN and discuss how you're doing. (How many of you were able to complete your lists?)
2. How did everyone do on last week's GC Action Step?

John 8:12

¹² Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me

will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”

3. What kind of reasons have you used in the past for not engaging in evangelism? Are you still clinging to any of these reasons? Why or why not?

Matthew 5:14

14 “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden.

4. List some ways the church in the world shines as a light to humanity:

John 20:21-23

21 Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.” 22 And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit.

- 5. What has been your experience with the Holy Spirit? Do you think about Him daily or is He “the forgotten God” to you?**

6. Jesus said that just as the Father sent Him, He sent us. Has evangelism been seen as optional to you? Why or why not?

7. What has been the greatest take away for you during this series?

GC ACTION STEP FOR THIS WEEK: What was your favorite Action Step during this series? Do it again this week.

PRAYER FOR THE MISSION:

- Pray that the Lord would continue to make us wise to win souls for His glory.
- Pray that the Lord would make us good listeners.
- Pray that He would show us how to treat our enemies with respect.