

- **Main Passage:** Matthew 28:18-20
 - **Purpose:** To see that sharing our faith with others regularly and intentionally is commanded of all Believers by Christ and is how the Gospel is spread, and disciples are made.
 - **Session Snapshot:** The Great Commission is given to all Believers, not just pastors and missionaries. As Christ-following men, we have the command and responsibility to carry the Gospel to our families, our workplaces, our neighborhoods, and everywhere that God has planted us.
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GETTING STARTED

Kick-off your time together by reviewing what you did in the last session.

FIRST, explain to your group that they will be continuing the video series on influence that is part of a larger study on what it means to pursue a masculinity that is centered in Christ. Remind them of what was covered in the previous session on influence. This week we transition to how we use our influence as a means of sharing the Gospel.

NEXT, ask for volunteers to share what they are getting out of their time in this study, particularly in regards to parts 1 and 2 of Influence.

FINALLY, if there are no questions or other input, transition into the *Digging In* section of your leader's guide.

DIGGING IN

Jump into the session by watching this week's video.

FIRST, ask if there are any follow up questions or points from your last session. Allow men to share, if they'd like, anything God has been revealing to them as you have started this journey on focusing on how we live out the quality of influence as godly men.

THEN, play the video. (You can access the video by logging into your Iron Hill Press account.) Encourage men to take notes as they watch the video.

When the video is over, lead men in a short discussion based on what Rick covered. Feel free to come up with your own questions, or consider asking some similar to those below:

- **When you think about sharing your faith with others, what feelings come to mind?**
- **Why do you think many men think it is someone else's responsibility to share the Gospel?**
- **How would you describe your ability to use your influence to disciple or teach others? How would you rate yourself as a disciple? How would your family or co-workers answer that question?**
- **Based on an honest look at your heart and your life, would you say you obediently live out the Great Commission, or would such an examination of your heart imply you view the passage in Matthew 28 as the Great Suggestion? How can you be more intentional in going, making disciples, and teaching others?**
- **Have you ever been on a mission trip? Did you find it easier to share Christ in that environment more so than in your daily environments of work, home, family, neighborhood, etc.? Why or why not?**
- **What are some steps you can take today to be a better disciple personally and to**

be a better disciple-maker?

FINALLY, transition into the *Opening the Word* portion of your time together by saying something like the following:

- **The command to share our faith and make disciples is found in the last recorded words of Christ in the gospel of Matthew. This is an important part of every Believer's walk, and yet it is something many of us do not consider regularly. Let's spend a few minutes together looking at this essential command given by Jesus.**

OPENING THE WORD

Spend time going deeper into a specific concept Rick introduced in the video.

FIRST, explain that you're going to take a more in-depth look at Matthew 28:18-20. Have a member of your group read the verses. Make sure your people have a good understanding of the context of the passage you'll be studying. Provide the context for the passage using the following bullet points:

- **Author:** Matthew, a former tax collector, was a disciple of Jesus and a firsthand witness to the stories he relates in his Gospel.
- **Time frame:** Most people hold to Matthew's Gospel having been written in the late A.D. 50s or 60s, though some think it was written after the destruction of the Temple in A.D. 70.
- **Purpose:** Matthew was writing to a primarily Jewish audience to convince them that Jesus was indeed the long-awaited Messiah. But he was probably aware of a Gentile audience, as his Gospel makes the case that the saving truth of Christ is for all nations.

THEN, when you finish, lead men in the following discussion:

- **Jesus is speaking to His disciples just before He ascends to heaven. These are the last words we have recorded in Matthew's account of Christ's life. Why is this passage so important?**
 - Answers will vary. In the verses before this passage, Jesus has been crucified, buried, and then resurrected on the third day. He has met His followers in Galilee in His glorified, resurrected state, and this is one of the last times Jesus will be physically with His disciples. Jesus is about to give His parting words to His closest friends, and He wants to be sure that they all clearly understand His desire for their lives after He is no longer with them. Christ's words passage are crucially important instructions to all of His followers. They apply not only to those who were there on the mountain with Him but also to us.
- **What foundation does Jesus say He has in verse 18 for the command He will give in verse 19?**
 - Answer: Jesus says that He has been given all authority in heaven and on earth; the only source for such authority is God the Father. This shows us how the absolute sovereignty of the Father is now shared totally and equally with the Son. We see here that the time of the humiliation of Jesus is over, and He is now, as the resurrected victor, exalted to the position of absolute Lord over all things, both seen (the natural) and unseen (the spiritual).
- **What does the authority of Jesus have to do with His command?**
 - Answer: When Jesus gives His command to His followers in verse 19, He is giving this command as their absolute Sovereign. The same is true of us as well. When we read the commandment, we must realize that we hear this from our Lord Who has all authority. This is not a suggestion or simply an encouraging word. This is a commandment. The importance of this commandment is reflected in the name given to this passage, the Great Commission. We are reading the orders of our sovereign commander and should recognize the authority from which this command is given.
- **What is the first word of the command given in verse 19?**
 - Answer: Go.
- **What does this word tell us about the intent of the commission from our Sovereign**

Lord?

- o Answer: The intent of the Great Commission is an offensive mindset. Many men take a defensive posture to their faith by staying put and preventing the lost from entering into their circle of friends. But the Great Commission tells us first and foremost to go. We are to go to the lost and the impure. We are to follow the life example of our Lord by looking for opportunities to share with sinners, not looking down on sinners.
- **What are we told to do as we go? What exactly does that mean?**
 - o Answer: We are told to go and make disciples. Making disciples is different from simply making converts. Jesus desires for us to invest in the lives of others and nurture them spiritually. This takes time to be a mentor and to invest in others. This means that we pour into others and teach them how to be an effective disciple. However, to make disciples, we must first be disciples. Making disciples is actively leading other Christ-followers in the Holy Spirit's sanctification process of being shaped into the image of Jesus.
- **Where are we called to go and make disciples? What is the disciple's responsibility in this command?**
 - o Answer: Jesus calls us to go and make disciples of all nations. That means all of us are responsible for openly welcoming and pursuing those of different ethnic groups, cultures, races, and creeds. There is no room for racism or bigotry in the Great Commission. Jesus does not specify that only certain followers are to go; rather, He instructs all disciples to go. For all Believers, to "go" means to bring the Gospel and make disciples in the areas of our lives where God has placed us and to exert our influence intentionally for Him. It also means we are to take part in the sharing of the Gospel to all nations.
- **What is the next part of the command Christ gives His disciples after we go and make disciples? What is the spiritual significance of this act?**
 - o Answer: The next part of the Great Commission, after we go and make disciples, is to baptize the new disciples in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The significance of baptism is that it is an outward sign of an internal, heartfelt decision. Baptism identifies us with Christ symbolizing the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ as a new convert. Also, it shows others the inward repentance of our hearts, thus showing our complete and total turn away from sin and toward God. Baptism does not bring or even complete salvation; rather, it is an act of obedience symbolizing our inward heart change to Jesus.
- **What is the last action phrase issued in this passage in verse 20?**
 - o Answer: Christ commands all of His followers to go, make disciples, baptize new disciples, and then to teach new disciples to obey all His commands. This instruction expounds on the idea of making disciples. To teach obedience, we as men must first know His commands and must also practice obedience. This means that we must know the Word of God through regular study and must obey it diligently. Again, this command was not just for Peter or the early church leaders alone; it was intended for all followers. All followers of Christ are instructed to be disciples and to go and make disciples, not just pastors, missionaries, church staff members, or Sunday school teachers.

FINALLY, say something like:

- **Let's not miss the important promise Jesus makes at the end of the commission. After giving the command to go, make disciples, baptize, and teach, Christ promises that He will be with us always to the end. After declaring His power, He issues His command and then promises us His presence. When we go, He is there leading us. When we make disciples and teach, His Holy Spirit is the agent of sanctification. When we baptize, we do so in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We have no reason to fear, for we are assured the mighty presence of our sovereign commander, and He will remain with us until the earth is no more!**

Ask if there are any questions, and if there are none, transition into *Accepting the Challenge*.

ACCEPTING THE CHALLENGE

Focus your group's attention on one key takeaway from your time together.

FIRST, explain that you want to challenge the group to focus on one main takeaway from this session. Say something like:

- **Most of us probably have heard this passage in Matthew 28 before, but we may not have looked at it in such detail previously. As we discuss the Great Commission in Matthew 28, we all must answer the following questions:**
 1. Ask yourself, "What keeps me from following these commands to go, make disciples, baptize, and teach? What fears do I need to remove to be obedient to this Great Command from Christ?"
 2. Next, ask yourself, "What kind of disciple am I? If other Believers were to follow my example in discipleship, would the church look more like Christ or less like it?"
 3. Lastly, evaluate your walk and ask yourself, "How can I be more intentional at sharing Christ with others in my work, my neighborhood, and in my family? To whom am I mentoring and teaching the Word of God regularly?"

FINALLY, encourage men to process these questions in the week to come. Challenge them to prayerfully listen to what God is trying to tell them personally regarding their call to go and make disciples, and to respond obediently. If there are no more questions or input, close your time together in prayer.