

Next Steps: Go
Matthew 28:18-20

September 27, 2026 am

HDBC

It's close to hunting seasons, so you may or might not appreciate this story. It was in a rural area when a 911 call came in. The person on the lined was frantic. ***Bubba's dead. He's dead. We were out hunting, he clutched his heart, doubled-over, fell on the ground and he's not moving. He's dead.*** The operator responded; ***sir, please calm down and let me give you some instructions. First, we need to make sure he's really dead.***

There was silence on the line for a few minutes, then she heard a shotgun blast. The man came back onto the line and said, ***OK, now what?***

Hopefully, that just a made-up story. But it illustrates just how critically important it is to clearly understand the assignment. That should not be a problem when it comes to the **Great Commission** of Jesus.

It's found in Matthew 18:18-20 and is pretty clear. In it we have our marching orders as believers and as churches. In the great commission we find a very **clear mission** that is to shape and direct us as a church and as followers of Christ. **READ TEXT: Matthew 28:18-20**

This was a conversation which took place shortly before the Lord's ascension back into Heaven. It was His way of **passing the baton**. He wanted them to clearly understand what was expected and what was at stake. God had called them and the world was depending on them.

We can summarize it under **three takeaway statements**.

1. Jesus has the authority to direct our lives.

All authority has been given to Jesus. That means He has the authority to give us instructions, to determine our purpose in lives and to establish our priorities. I don't have the authority to tell you what to do with your life, but Jesus does. Why does He have this authority?

His Father gives Him the authority.
His nature gives Him the authority.
His role as the creator gives Him the authority.
His role as the sovereign ruler gives Him the authority.

Authority – refers to the *freedom and right to speak and act as one pleases*. And for Jesus that authority is unlimited. This is reinforced by the word **all** and in the phrase, *in heaven and on earth*.

During his ministry on earth He demonstrated that authority over sickness, over sin, over nature, over Satan, and even over death. And He has used that authority to send us out to be disciple-makers.

Some might say, *what authority do I have to try to lead someone else to become a disciple of Christ?* The authority of Jesus.

Earlier Jesus had said, *as the Father has sent me, so I send you*. He was transferring His mission to them and with it came His authority.

Walk into an emergency room for treatment, they are going to make me sign a consent form, authorizing them to treat you. If I go to the bank and want to withdraw money, I must sign a form giving them authority to release the money. Jesus has signed the form, authorizing us to go into the world and make disciples in His authority. Don't let anyone tell you that you have no right to share Jesus with others. He says you do.

Jesus has called us to one primary mission.

2. Jesus calls us to make disciples of all people.

There is only **one imperative** in this passage. It is **make disciples**. It means a **brisk command, an order**. What does it mean? **A disciple is one who has chosen to attach himself to another** in the sense of learning from that other person and following that person's lead. In NT terms it means to follow Jesus, trusting Him as Savior and Lord. We are called to lead other people into that discipleship relationship with Jesus.

Three words describe how we are to do so.

1) Consistently

Dominant meaning here is *as you are going* in the normal course of your life, *make disciples*. As you go to **school**, *make disciples*. As you do your **job** each day, *make disciples*. As you interact at the **gym**, in the **civic club**, or in the **community**, *make disciples*.

2) Intentionally

But there are also those times when we are instructed to go out and find them. Jesus said *go out into the highways and hedges and compel them to come in*. Paul set the example by going to places where the Gospel had not been. Intentionality is important. You will not accidentally end up on a mission team, serve in an outreach event, or find yourself as a career missionary.

You will not accidentally find yourself in a Gospel conversation at school, work, in the park or as you are going through your day. Watch for opportunities. Pray for them. Respond to them.

3) Universally

There are no limitations. *All the nations*. Literally of every ethnic group. Any limitations that we feel we have to witnessing are really man-made. Jesus has made it clear that none are to be excluded. *Couple who decided to go where people had never heard*.

This is why HDBC spends money on missions.

This is why HDBC sends our multiple mission teams each year.

This is why we pray for the Afar people in the horn of Africa.

In practical terms what does this mean? Three things.

Lead lost people to saving faith in Christ.

Baptize saved people as a testimony of their faith in Christ.

Teach saved people what it means to follow Christ.

The ultimate goal in following Christ is to become a disciple-maker.

This is what a disciple of Jesus does.

What does this look like at HDBC?

We have summarized it by using three key words, which define three steps or three stages in the process.

1) **Gather** as believers

Who are in this stage? All believers, regardless of how long you've been saved or how mature you are in Christ. We never stop gathering in this life or in Heaven. It includes unbelievers and believers. Seekers and even doubters. New believers and old believers. Young and old. Converted and the curious. What does it look like at HDBC? **Take out the Next Steps Card to get some ideas.**

Gathering is a beginning step or stage, but not the end. We want those who **gather** to take the next step, and **grow**.

2) **Grow** as disciples

The focus is on **being intentional** about growing in your faith. Involves Bible study, serious prayer life, serving on a ministry team at church, discovering and using your spiritual gifts. **See the Next Steps Card for practice steps you can take Look at the card.**

Gathering is a beginning step or stage. **Growing** is the next step or stage. We want those who **gather** and **grow** to take the next step. **Going** as disciple-makers. That is the great commission!

3) **Go** as disciple-makers

This involves the intentional effort to lead others to become disciples of Jesus, ultimately resulting in more disciple-makers. We want to equip, encourage, and lead people to . . .

Share their personal testimonies of salvation.

Know how to share a simple presentation of the Gospel.

Use their spiritual gifts in leadership roles.

Serve on a short-term mission team.

Intentionally investing in unbelievers or unchurched people.

What are some practical steps you can take?

Look at the Next Steps card.

1. Jesus has the authority to direct our lives.
2. Jesus calls us to make disciples of all people.

3. Jesus promises to be with us as we obey Him.

The command is clear. So why is there a reluctance? **Three Reasons:**

1) Fear of failure

We fear we will drive someone further from God.

We fear we will say or do the wrong thing.

We fear we will be asked something we don't know.

We fear we will be rejected, ridiculed or persecuted.

Don't let fear keep you from obeying this basic command of Jesus.

2) Selfish distractions

We are enamored with the things of this world. Other things take priority and consume our time, energies, focus, intentions.

Career, activities, hobbies, family, money, success, popularity, stuff.

It does not matter how much your kids succeed in sports and hobbies if they do not become followers of Jesus.

3) Lack of love for others

Maybe this comes from an unwillingness to take seriously the truth that lost people are on their way to an eternal hell. There are people around you who are lost. Remember hell is a real place where real people are heading. Faith in Jesus is their only hope.

We are called to share the good news with our generation. Previous generations cannot do so. Future generations cannot do so. Only we can share Jesus with this generation.

During this three-part series we've introduced you to the Biblical process of discipleship. It involves three basic steps or stages. We've defined them as

Gather . . . Grow . . . Go

Everyone in our church is in one of those stages. Discipleship involves being in all three stages. You don't leave one to enter another. Think of it more like entering a large room (Gather). Inside that room is another room (Grow). When you enter it you see another door (Go). When you get into that room you are still in all three.

So, what room are you in? What step do you need to take to move along in your own discipleship process? Don't be stagnant. Don't be content to stay in one of the first two stages.

Missionary, David Livingston, who opened Africa for missions once said, ***I'll go anywhere, so long as it is forward.***

The church is called not simply to lead people to faith in Christ.

The church is called not simply to help saved people grow.

The church is called to make disciples who become disciple-makers.

For some of you in this room, that is your ***next step***. To become a disciple-maker. Will you take the step? Will you make yourself available to Christ and allow Him to use you in His Great Commission?

Assurances:

- 1. The authority of Jesus gives us power.**
- 2. The call of Jesus gives us purpose.**
- 3. The presence of Jesus gives us confidence.**