

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 one 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** to them. 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 statements to remember.

1. Jesus has the authority to direct our lives.

All authority has been given to Jesus. That means He has the authority to direct our lives, to give us our instructions, to determine our purpose in lives. I don't have the authority to tell you what to do with your life, but Jesus does. What gives Him the 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 phrase, *in heaven and on earth*.

During his ministry on earth He demonstrated that authority over and over again. He had authority over sickness and disease, over sin, over nature, over Satan and demons, 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.

Why should I witness? The one who sits in authority over the world tells me to. We have been authorized by Him.

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. Don't let anyone tell you that you have no right to share Jesus with others. You do, under His authority.

Jesus has the authority to direct our lives.
And notice what He has directed us to do.

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. So, even though the word **Go** is not an imperative, the intent is here.

As you are going . . . you must intentionally look for ways and opportunities to make disciples. Conversations, support, encouragement, relationships, ministries, are all ways to do so.

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.

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.

We call this the *discipleship process*.

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

First stage or step in the discipleship process involves gathering.

Includes seekers who have not yet become Christians but who are interested. Includes younger believers who are still figuring out all that it means to be a Christ-follower. 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, active 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.**

In the process of **Going as disciple-makers** we encourage people to **Gather** as believers and **Grow** as disciples. But there is more. We want to lead them to then become **disciple-makers** themselves.

3) Go as disciple-makers

This involves the intentional effort to be a disciple-maker. What does that look like at HDBC? We want to equip 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.
Leading small groups or Grow groups.
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 we like. Other things take priority and consume our time, energies, focus, intentions.
Career, activities, hobbies, family, money, success, popularity, stuff.

3) Lack of love for others

Maybe we fail to make disciples because we lack a 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 involved in all three stages on a regular basis. 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.

For that to happen the people of the church must be 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.**