

Jesus' Church

g r o u p s t u d y



Lesson 7
The Mission

this book belongs to

date

Make the Most of this Study

The following recommendations will help your Jesus' Church Study Group experience the intended outcomes:

1. Each lesson builds upon the previous lesson, so work together and find a way to cover all seven lessons in as close to seven weeks as possible.
2. Invite everyone to bring their Bibles and pens.
3. If possible, sit at a table to be able to read, write, snack, and be closer to one another.

** Supplemental teaching videos and downloadable booklets are all available through the BFAM App. Visit: <https://bit.ly/BFAMapp> or scan the QR code.*



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Though the ESV and certain English versions do not capitalize divine pronouns, they have been capitalized in this resource.

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A Solid Lives Ministry**

All authority in heaven and
on earth has been given to
Me. Go therefore and

make disciples

of all nations, baptizing
them in the name of the
Father and of the Son and
of the Holy Spirit, teaching
them to observe all that I
have commanded you.

Matthew 28:18–20

07 | The Mission

Welcome to Lesson Seven of the Jesus' Church group study! Let's open in prayer and ask God to teach us today about Jesus' Church. [Open in prayer.]

Before we begin this week's lesson, let's each take no more than 30 to 60 seconds to share something we received from this past week's scriptures. [Invite everyone to share.]

Thanks to each of you for sharing. At the end of this lesson, you'll find this week's 7-Day Plan. Once again, we'll take 10 to 15 minutes a day to read a short Scripture passage, write the answer to a question or two, and pray that God will use us that day to minister to people.

Okay, let's begin Lesson Seven. This final lesson is called "The Mission."

What is the Church? (Review)

Before we discuss the mission of Jesus' Church, let's remind ourselves what the Church is. The English New Testament uses the word "church" to translate the Greek word *ekklesia* (ek-klay-see'-ah). The word *ekklesia* means "an assembly of people." In the New Testament, the word "church" is used to describe 1) the universal Church around the world; 2) a local church or house church; and, 3) a collective church, such as "the church of Ephesus" which was comprised of many house churches. It's never used to describe a building.

Jesus' Church

Jesus said in Matthew 16:18, "I will build My Church," so we know that Jesus personally builds His Church. However, the New Testament also teaches us that Jesus does not build it alone. He empowers believers to help Him build it. Let's read part of Ephesians 4:11-16 from the New Living Translation. This is one of many passages that explain how Jesus uses us to build the Church:

"Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. 12 Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do His work and build up the church... 16 ... as each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow."

Notice, that this passage begins with Jesus Himself. Verse 11 says Christ gave gifts to His Church. The result is that all the members of His Church are used to build one another up. So it's true that Jesus builds His Church, but it's also true that He empowers every member of His body to help Him build it. This building process is primarily what we've been studying in this Jesus' Church group study. Here's a summary of what we learned in the first six lessons:

1. The Foundation: Jesus is the foundation of His Church, and we, as living stones, are built together on that foundation as each of us responds to the person of Jesus Christ with faith and obedience. As part of Jesus' Church, we continue to confess Jesus as our Lord and obey Him.

2. The Power: The Holy Spirit is the power behind Jesus' Church. Jesus wants each of us to be filled (baptized) with the Holy Spirit to be empowered to strengthen and build ourselves up, build up one another, and reach the world.

Jesus said, "I will build My Church." However, the New Testament also teaches us that Jesus does not build it alone.

3. The Teaching: The Word of God, and specifically the New Testament, is our primary "apostles' teaching" today. God wants each of us to read His Word every day, as well as when we gather together, to hear what God is speaking to us and to obey Him.

4. The Fellowship: *Koinonia* fellowship includes loving, sharing, participating, partnering, and giving. God wants us to commit to the fellowship in these ways and also to edify one another through the gifts and power of the Holy Spirit.

5. The Bread: Jesus instituted the practice of the breaking of bread, the Lord's Supper, in the New Testament. Along with sharing regular meals together, Jesus wants us to regularly share the Lord's Supper to remember Him and what He did for us, as well as what He has now called us to do because of His sacrifice.

6. The Prayers: Jesus taught us to use our God-given authority and His name to pray with various kinds of prayer so that the will of God comes to pass on the earth. Along with praying daily as individuals, Jesus calls us to pray together in agreement so that our prayers will be exponentially more powerful.

As you can see, the Jesus' Church group study has primarily focused on us doing our part to help build and strengthen Jesus' Church. This is so important. However, Jesus also wants us to know why the Church needs to be built. Jesus builds His Church for a mission. So let's turn our attention now to the mission of Jesus' Church.

The mission of Jesus' Church is the specific task with which Jesus has charged His Church..

What is a Mission?

In the 1960s CBS introduced a new television series called, "Mission Impossible." It was about a group of undercover agents who were sent on important and dangerous missions. Each episode began with a scene in which the team leader, Mr. Phelps, would receive an audio tape recording describing the next mission. The recording always included the phrase, "Your mission, should you choose to accept it..." and then the seemingly impossible mission was briefly described before the tape self-destructed. The rest of the show was about them carrying out that mission.

Merriam-Webster's dictionary defines a mission as "a specific task with which a person or a group is charged." So the mission of Jesus' Church is, therefore, the specific task with which Jesus has charged His Church. So what is the mission of Jesus' Church?

The Mission of Jesus' Church

Let's read a little more of what Jesus said in Matthew 16:18. He said, "I will build My church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." This phrase not only reveals that Jesus will build His Church, but also

the reason He will build it—to break through the gates of hell. Why does Jesus want His Church to break through the gates of hell? Primarily to save those who are lost. Jesus made this abundantly clear when He said things like:

“God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world” (John 3:17, CSB).

“The Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost” (Luke 19:10).

“Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. 16 Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved” (Mark 16:15–16, CSB).

Where are the lost? 1 John 5:19 says, “The whole world is under the power of the evil one” (BSB). So, those who don’t know Jesus are still under the control of the devil and, figuratively speaking, behind the gates of hell. The gates of hell represent Satan using his power to keep people under his control and lost for eternity.

This is why Jesus is deeply committed to building and empowering His Church. He wants His Church to become so strong and unstoppable that it will break through every gate of hell to save lost people. And this, brothers and sisters, is “The Mission” of Jesus’ Church. Or let’s just say it plainly, this is our mission, and the mission of every believer on the face of the earth. The question is, how do we do it?

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Jesus’ Commission

Though Jesus gave many teachings and commands during His ministry on earth, He focused on one specific command just before His ascension. It’s commonly known as “the Great Commission.”

Merriam-Webster’s dictionary defines a commission as “an authorization or command to act in a prescribed manner or to perform prescribed acts.” Therefore, Jesus’ Commission is His authorization or command to act in a prescribed manner or to perform prescribed acts.

Said plainly, the Great Commission is Jesus commissioning His Church with their mission, and all four Gospels as well as the book of Acts include some version of it (Matthew 28:19–20; Mark 16:15–18; Luke 24:45–49; John 20:21; Acts 1:8). So let's ask, what did Jesus authorize and commission His Church to do? Let's look at the commission Jesus gave to His disciples in Matthew 28:19–20:

*“Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, **20** and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age” (NIV).*

Let's notice several things Jesus told them to do, as well as things He didn't mention.

First, He told them to “go.” He didn't tell them to find a building and invite everyone to come to it, but rather to go to where the people were.

Second, He told them to go and “make disciples.” Jesus didn't teach them to focus on gathering crowds, but rather on making disciples of individuals.

Third, He told them to make disciples “of all nations.” The mission He was giving them was not only for Jewish people in Israel, but for people everywhere.

Fourth, Jesus told them that every new disciple should be baptized in water in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, thus introducing them to all three members of the Godhead.

Fifth, He told them to teach the disciples to obey everything He had commanded them, which would certainly include this commission to make disciples of all nations.

And last, Jesus told them that though they would no longer see Him, He would surely and always be with them as they carried out this mission, even to the very end of the age.

Now remember, Jesus had just spent about two and a half years discipling these men, and now He was sending them to do the same thing with others. Jesus didn't collect money to build buildings to accommodate the large crowds He taught, and He didn't command His disciples to do that either. On the other hand, Jesus didn't prohibit building buildings, He simply didn't mention it. But what He did clearly say was that His disciples should focus on making disciples, and making them in every nation of the world.

This mission must have sounded like "Mission Impossible" to them. Make disciples of all nations? Was Jesus really saying He wanted people in every part of the world who spoke every language to be saved and discipled? Absolutely!

Jesus Commissioned Us

Now here's where it gets interesting, Jesus wasn't only commissioning His disciples, He was commissioning every person who would ever put their faith in Him. How do we know? Along with many other Scriptures that reveal this, Jesus gave us two clear indications in these verses.

The first indication is in the phrase, "Make disciples of all nations." Jesus knew these men would not live long enough to travel to all the nations of the world and learn their languages. In fact, He had warned that at least some of them would be martyred (Luke 21:16; John 16:2; 21:18–19). And the best sources available tell us that nearly all were.

The second is the phrase, "Surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." Jesus knew these disciples would not live until the end of the age, so why would He say that? The answer is that Jesus was not only giving this commission to the eleven disciples, He was also commissioning all future believers on the earth.

*Said simply, the mission of Jesus' Church is:
"Go make disciples of all nations."*

Let's read part of the prayer that Jesus prayed for His disciples the night He was arrested. He said to His Father, "I am praying not only for these disciples but also for all who will ever believe in Me through their message" (John 17:20, NLT). We must therefore understand that the Great Commission—Jesus' Commission—was also given to us, Jesus' Church today. And Jesus is still saying to us, "Surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Said simply, the mission of Jesus' Church is: "Go make disciples of all nations."

How Are We Doing?

So, how is Jesus' Church doing?

The world population is currently about 8 billion people. According to joshuaproject.org:

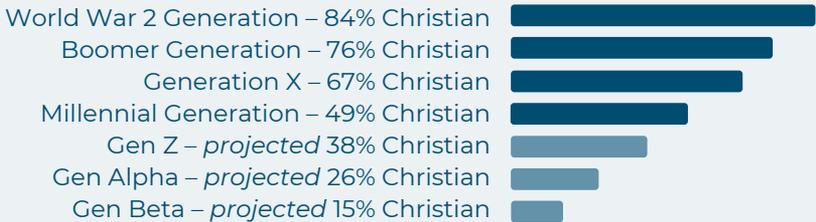
- About 2.5 billion people (31.5%) claim to be Christian. (It should be noted that this number includes many people who identify themselves as "Christian" but do not actively follow the teachings of Jesus. Therefore, according to Scripture, the number of true believers is far less.)
- Therefore, well over 5.5 billion people (68.5%) are still non-believers.
- Of the 17,427 people groups in the world, 42.1% are still unreached.
- And 2.18 billion people (28%) have still had virtually no exposure to the gospel whatsoever.

In most places in the world people are either not being reached at all or they're not being reached fast enough to keep up with the population growth. Let's use the United States of America as an example of a nation that is "not being reached fast enough."

In his book called, *I Am a Church Member*, Thom Rainer said, "Nine out of ten churches in America are declining, or growing at a pace slower than the rate of their communities."

Why is this happening? Church leaders in America have arguably had more training, more tools, more access to information, and more money than any other nation in the world, yet their churches on average have continued to decline in both members and number of baptized believers.

Ron Luce, author of *Faith at the Speed of Light* and leader of the Ministry Mastermind Group and Project 13, shares the following statistics and projections of Christianity in America over seven generations based on current trends:



Why is this happening? Is God responsible for this decline?

Why It's Not Working

Let's settle two things right away. First, if the Church in America carries on with business as usual, generations of Americans will be eternally lost. The Church must change quickly. And second, God is not the problem. Isaiah 59:1 says, "Surely the arm of the Lord is not too short to save, nor His ear too dull to hear" (NIV).

Then why has the Church in America been losing ground so quickly?

There are, of course, many societal factors including significant cultural, moral, social, and technological changes. However, among church leaders, there seems to be one reason being cited more than any other. The Church in America has been focusing more on church growth in recent decades than it has on making disciples. This diversion from the mission of Jesus' Church was, for the most part, well-intended, but it has proven to be a very costly lesson reminding us that there is no better way to reach the world than what Jesus taught us—to make a disciple of each and every person.

Disciple-Making Movements

On a more positive note, there are certain places in the world where God is moving powerfully and where hundreds of thousands—and even millions—of people are being reached for Christ and discipled.

How is this happening?

The most effective strategies God is using today are called Disciple-Making Movements (formerly Church Planting Movements), which are defined as:

"Obedience-based discipleship that sees disciples reproducing disciples, leaders reproducing leaders, churches reproducing churches and movements reproducing movements."

(Stan Park, Strategist and DMM Trainer)

The focus is not on growing large churches, but rather on making disciples. Unlike most church growth methods, Disciple-Making Movements focus on quality, not quantity. They start very small with obedience-based discipleship, as Jesus taught His disciples, and they teach every new disciple to disciple others. As each disciple becomes a disciple-maker, multiplication occurs. And as time goes on, the multiplication of disciples, disciple-makers, leaders, and churches cause significant and exponential growth.

*The focus is not on growing large churches,
but rather on making disciples.*

In his book called *Church Planting Movements* first published in 2004, Dr. David Garrison said:

"Without exaggeration, we can say that Church Planting Movements [now called Disciple Making Movements] are the most effective means in the world today for drawing lost millions into saving, disciple-building relationships with Jesus Christ. That may appear to be an ambitious claim, but it is an accurate one, and an honest description of how God is winning a lost world."

According to Missions Frontiers, the average campus-style church in America before the Covid-19 pandemic had about 75 members. In contrast, the average Disciple Making Movement has about 100,000 members and is still growing fast.

Here's another shocker: compared to Disciple Making Movements, campus-style churches consume enormous amounts of time, energy, and resources, but see far less results. For example, Jesus' Commission tells us that the first thing we should do when discipling someone who confesses faith in Christ is to baptize them in water. According to The Joshua Project, the average campus-style church in America baptizes one new believer for every 1.5 million dollars they receive. In contrast, the average Disciple Making Movement baptizes one new believer for every 66 cents they receive.

You may think, "What? 66 cents? How do they do it?"

It's very simple. They spend their money on making disciples, training disciple-makers ... it's very effective.

It's very simple. They spend their money on making disciples, training disciple-makers and leaders, and planting house churches. And it's very effective.

Could it be that churches in the West have over-invested their time and money in things like buildings, campuses, audio-visual equipment, and stage lights and under-invested in making disciples and training disciple-makers? Could it be that we should more closely follow the model that Jesus taught the 12 apostles and use resources that are already available, such as homes, workplace meeting rooms, and dorm rooms to disciple people and plant churches? Could it also be that we should follow Jesus' model and activate every believer to make disciples rather than a small minority of believers trying to disciple everyone?

Back to the Mission

Jesus is fervently calling His Church back to the mission He gave us. He is saying to each and every believer, “Your mission, should you choose to accept it, is to ‘go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.’”

Though we do need many more churches, Jesus didn’t teach us to begin with church planting. He taught us to begin with our mission. As each of us accepts the mission and begins making disciples that make disciples that make disciples, the number of disciples will multiply, and planting new churches for the new disciples to attend will become both natural and necessary. These new churches will be established in homes, neighborhoods, workplaces, and schools—among people groups where there are currently no churches. And from there the new believers will reach out to their own networks of people and begin discipling them. Can you see it? This is what Jesus trained the 12 apostles to do, and this is what Jesus is training us to do.

How will we do it? The Church needs a new model of ministry, or really, an old one. About 2,000 years old to be exact. We need to more closely follow the model that Jesus taught His 12 disciples. The one that they taught the early church. The one Jesus is teaching us in this study. Jesus is calling for a revival of Jesus’ Church.

BFAM Movements

BFAM is an acronym that stands for “Be fruitful and multiply,” the first words recorded in Scripture that God spoke to Adam and Eve. The words fruitful and multiply continue to be used throughout God’s Word to explain how God’s plan is carried out in people’s lives. Today, Jesus is calling every believer and ministry to “be fruitful and multiply.” He is calling many pastors to become apostolic leaders, and many churches and ministries to become Disciple-Making Movements.

How will this happen? Through scriptural training and the power of the Holy Spirit.

BFAM Movements is a ministry that provides free training, resources, and support to believers, churches, and ministries to start Disciple-Making Movements. The resources are available on the BFAM App as well as through the website www.BFAMmovements.com. Part of the vision of BFAM Movements is to help pastors and leaders transition their churches or ministries into Disciple-Making Movements. The transition is not to fragment the ministry, but rather to expand it for the purpose of increased fruitfulness and multiplication.

One example of a church becoming a movement is The Rock, a multi-site church based in Anaheim, California. Though it was almost exclusively a campus-only ministry, it adopted The BFAM Strategy and began training people to make disciples and launch house churches. One by one, other changes were made to transform the ministry from a church into a movement. For example, though each of its campus churches is still called, “The Rock,” the name of the overall ministry is now “The Rock Network.” By adding the word “network” to their name and restructuring accordingly, they can now support an ever-increasing number of house churches and ministries. They’ve also adopted an “everyone disciples” model of ministry.

Another example is Solid Lives, a non-profit ministry. Though not a church, it adopted The BFAM Strategy and began launching house churches under the Solid Lives House Church Network. It now has house churches in multiple states, each of which has a vision to be fruitful and multiply.

“Go ... and make disciples of all nations.”

Matthew 28:19

What is The BFAM Strategy?

The BFAM Strategy is a strategy that individuals, churches, and ministries can use to start and lead a Disciple-Making Movement by training disciples to make disciples that make disciples, leaders to train leaders that train leaders, and churches to plant churches that plant churches.

We recommend that house churches study through books of the Bible, primarily books of the New Testament (the apostles’ teaching). BFAM Movements provides free house church studies of New Testament books and we recommend that each house church begin with the Gospel of John, then the book of Acts, and the book of Romans in that order. There are also three foundational group studies we recommend for each house church to help launch The BFAM Strategy:

- **Jesus’ Church Group Study** – a study of how Jesus wants believers to meet regularly, relate to each other, and build one another up.
- **Jesus’ Commission Group Study** – a study of how to carry out the mission of Jesus’ Church—the Great Commission—to make disciples of all nations.
- **Jesus’ Gifts Group Study** – a study of the leadership gifts that Jesus gave to His Church. This study is designed to help each person discover their specific leadership gifts and calling.

What We Must Do Now

Every follower of Jesus is called 1) to be part of Jesus' Church, 2) to carry out Jesus' Commission, and 3) to exercise and receive from Jesus' Gifts.

1. Jesus' Church

Hebrews 10 says, *"Let us not give up the habit of meeting together, as some are doing. Instead, let us encourage one another all the more, since you see that the Day of the Lord is coming nearer"* (Hebrews 10:25, GNB).

2. Jesus' Commission

Matthew 28 says, *"Go and make disciples of all nations"* (Matthew 28:19-20, NIV).

3. Jesus' Gifts

Ephesians 4 says, *"Christ gave each one of us the special gift ... to make the body of Christ stronger"* (Ephesians 4:7, 12; NCV).

This sounds like a big commitment, and it is. In fact, it will cost you control of your life.

Then why should we do it? The Bible gives many reasons to obey Jesus, but let's mention three: Jesus' sacrifice, Jesus' commandments, and love for Jesus.

Jesus' Sacrifice

What did Jesus sacrifice for us? Everything. God's Word says:

"While we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8).

"He gave up His divine privileges [in heaven]; He took the humble position of a slave and was born as a human being... 8 He humbled Himself in obedience to God and died a criminal's death on a cross" (Philippians 2:7-8, NLT).

"He was wounded for our rebellious acts. He was crushed for our sins. He was punished so that we could have peace, and we received healing from His wounds" (Isaiah 53:5, GW).

Jesus' Commandment

And what does Jesus command us to do in response to receiving salvation by His grace? Let's read Matthew 16:24-26:

[Jesus said] "If anyone wants to be a follower of Mine, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. 25 For anyone who keeps his life for himself shall lose it; and anyone who loses his life for Me shall find it again. 26 What profit is there if you gain the whole world—and lose eternal life? What can be compared with the value of eternal life?" (The Living Bible).

Love for Jesus

Jesus tells us in John 14:15:

“If you love Me, you will obey My commandments” (GW).

According to Jesus, if we really love Him, we will be so thankful for His sacrifice that we will lay down our lives to serve Him and help Him reach the many lost people in the world.

Before we close, let’s take time to discuss these questions.

Discussion Questions

(Be sure to pray together before answering these questions.)

1. [Each person answers] Do I love Jesus enough to obey everything He is asking me to do?
2. [Group] Do we love Jesus enough to obey whatever He is asking us to do as a group?
3. [Group] Does Jesus want this group, or a part of this group, to be a regular church gathering? If so, when and where will we meet each week?
4. [Group] If this is a church, what ministry or network will this church be a part of?
5. [Group] If this is a church, what will we study next week? The book of John?

Close in Prayer

As we close, let’s spend some time praying for each other’s needs and ministering to each other.

7-Day Plan | Week Seven

Day 1 | My daily scripture and prayer

Read: Matthew 7:21–23

Write: What does this passage mean?

Pray: Submit yourself to God today as a member of Jesus' Church, and ask Him to use you to minister to people.

*"If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God,
who gives generously to all without reproach,
and it will be given him."*

James 1:5

Day 2 | My daily scripture and prayer

Read: Luke 6:46–49

Write: Summarize this passage in your own words.

Pray: Submit yourself to God today as a member of Jesus' Church, and ask Him to use you to minister to people.

Day 3 | My daily scripture and prayer

Read: Ephesians 4:1–4

Write: How many times is your calling mentioned here? What does it ask us to do about our calling?

Pray: Submit yourself to God today as a member of Jesus' Church, and ask Him to use you to minister to people.

Day 4 | My daily scripture and prayer

Read: Mark 16:15–20

Write: What help does this passage tells us we have as we go out to reach the world?

Pray: Submit yourself to God today as a member of Jesus' Church, and ask Him to use you to minister to people.

Day 5 | My daily scripture and prayer

Read: Ephesians 2:10

Write: Summarize this verse in your own words.

Pray: Submit yourself to God today as a member of Jesus' Church, and ask Him to use you to minister to people.

Day 6 | My daily scripture and prayer

Read: John 8:31–32

Write: According to this passage, how can we tell if someone is a disciple of Jesus?

Pray: Submit yourself to God today as a member of Jesus' Church, and ask Him to use you to minister to people.

Reminder!

Does the Lord have something for you to share with someone at your coming Jesus' Church gathering? Continue to invite Him to speak through you.

Day 7 | My daily scripture and prayer

Read: 2 Timothy 2:20–21

Write: What does this passage tell us we can do to be ready to be used by God?

Pray: Submit yourself to God today as a member of Jesus' Church, and ask Him to use you to minister to people.

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