



NG Study Guide: Matthew 28:16-20 “Making disciples who make disciples (pt. 1)” [5.29.22]

Love God + know the Bible better:

1. Read the passage cited above and try to answer the questions below before your group meets.
2. *Leader note: Please review the brief instructions for leaders at the bottom.*

The Study

Thesis: All people benefit from being discipled by others to love God and love neighbors. Those who are disciples have been given the command and opportunity to disciple others to help them grow in their love for God and neighbors, and make disciples who do likewise.

Subject: The Great Commission

Object: Make Disciples Locally

Context: Here in Matthew 28 we see that Jesus has previously been crucified and in the tomb for 3 days. And after the 3rd day, “Mary Magdalene and the other Mary” [Matt. 28:1] have gone to the tomb where Jesus was laid and He was no longer there. They depart to go tell the disciples that His body is missing, when Jesus appears to these women, and gives them the command to “rejoice!” that He is alive, and to tell His disciples to go to Galilee [Matt. 28:9-10]. The disciples then depart from Jerusalem, to go to Galilee to the mountain which Jesus had appointed for them [Matt. 28:16].

This moment that Jesus appears to His 11 disciples is one of the most significant moments in the history of the world. He has proven that He is alive, that He has conquered death and sin just as He foretold, that all the OT prophecies are true, that He is the one with all authority in heaven and on earth. He has just demonstrated that He truly is the Son of God with the power to forgive sins and offer eternal life. The message that they have been proclaiming has been validated by the very presence of Jesus.

And with his last command, His final word of wisdom, His last piece of advice for His disciples before he ascends into Heaven is this: “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations [28:19].” This is the single most important thing that He has to leave them with. Essentially saying, what you’ve just witnessed, go and tell the world.

All Nations - what does that mean. Acts 1:8

- Jerusalem (the city in which they live)
- Judea (the southern kingdom in which Jerusalem is location)
- Samaria (the Northern Kingdom, the region bordering Judea to the north)
- The ends of the earth (all other nations)

1. What is a disciple?

- A follower of Jesus who is growing to love God supremely, love neighbors as themselves, and makes other disciples who do likewise.

2. How do we make disciples?

A. **Emulate Christ** - [2 Pt. 3:18] *but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen.*

As followers of Jesus, as disciples, we are called to “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” As we become more like Christ, we model His characteristics to the world. As we’ve discussed throughout this Foundations of the Faith series, followers of Jesus are to abide in Christ and bear fruit [Jn. 15]. This fruit of the Spirit [Gal. 5] is evidence to those around us of the love, and grace, and mercy of Christ. As we are disciples, we are able to help make disciples by emulating Christ and modeling what the life of a disciple truly looks like. *It’s like a moth to the light, they are drawn in because of the beauty of Christ that they see in us.*

Emulating Christ, or ensuring that we are bearing fruit on an individual level can often be where we stop in the disciple-making process. But it truly is an active command that requires us to be outwardly focused. We are told to “go” and “make” these are both active verbs that don’t just require that our lives bear fruit, but rather that we are going out to help others grow as well.

B. **Evangelize others** - [Matt. 28:19; Acts 2:38-41; Acts 8:26-40; Acts 16:13-15]

Evangelism: to spread the Christian gospel by public preaching or personal witness. Sharing the Good News is inherently connected to the “making” of disciples [Matt. 28:19]. One cannot be made into a disciple without learning from and following Jesus.

It’s important to note that evangelism and baptism are very closely related throughout the New Testament. They often go hand in hand with one another. We see that the first verb connected with the command to make disciples is to baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit [Matt. 28:19]. “Repent and be baptized” [Acts 2:38]. Phillip shares Jesus with the Ethiopian and he is immediately baptized [Acts 8:26-40]. Lydia places her faith in Jesus and immediately she and her household are baptized [Acts 16:13-15]. When people are told and believe in the Good News of Jesus, they respond with baptism: a physical act of a spiritual principle.

But they must be told the Good News, first. This is where evangelism comes in. Many of us prefer to dissociate discipleship from evangelism, and categorize them as two different things. We see that evangelism is a spiritual gift [Eph. 4:11], and many of us prefer to think we simply don’t have that gift. And though it may be a gift, it is also a commandment for all believers [Matt. 28:19]. Therefore, those who many not have the gift of evangelism are not absolved from the command to go and make disciples. We’ve been commanded share the Good News of Jesus.

At Calvary Nexus we focus a lot on the Great Commandment: Love God, Love Neighbors [Matt. 22:36-40]. But we cannot do this at the neglect of the Great Commission. We must also focus on the Great Commission [Matt. 28:16-20].

C. **Encourage gathering together** [Heb. 10:24-25]

²⁴ And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, ²⁵ not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.

How do we stir up love and good works in others [Heb. 10:24]? In other words, how do we help teach them to observe the things that Jesus commanded [Matt. 28:20]? One way we can do that is by encouraging people to gather together. The author of Hebrews here is specifically speaking of the gathering together for the worship of God and the teaching of Scripture.

- **In Church**

Therefore, simply put, one of the ways we can help disciple others in love and good works is by encouraging them and inviting them to church. We all know people that for whatever reasons they have, forsake gathering together in church. It is our job, as disciples of Jesus to obey the Great Commission by encouraging our family, friends, and loved ones to gather together; to invite them into all the incredible benefits that we are able to experience together here on Sundays.

- **In Neighborhood Groups**

Another gathering space that we have the opportunity to invite them into is our Neighborhood Groups. This too is a space where we are able to experience the worship of God and experience the teaching of His Word. We should be inviting others into this space in our lives. Often times, we get comfortable in these environments and would prefer not to invite others into our groups. But this is the perfect way to help disciple others by encouraging them join a Neighborhood Group, but specifically your Neighborhood Group.

D. **Engage believers** [Matt. 28:20]

As we “go” and “make,” we baptize (the initial response to the fresh work of Christ), and then we teach them to observe all things that Jesus commanded [Matt. 28:20]. Now, I believe that this concept of teaching others is what we typically think of when we think of discipleship. The process of helping other believers grow in their faith. What this process looks like is likely different for each person and each discipleship relationship, but what we see biblically is that it does take intentionality. Jesus seeks out those that he desires to teach and calls them to follow him [Matt. 4:18-22, Mark 1:16-20, Luke 5:1-11, John 1:35-51]. Now this is significant, because we see Jesus engage these 12 men differently than He engaged the rest of His followers.

He intentionally sought them out. He intentionally invited them to be His disciples. He taught them the Word of God and how to live, and He lived life with them. Jesus had many other followers, and many other people that he impacted, but these 12 were different. He shows us this model of intentionally teaching these 12 men.

This is the concept of apprenticeship. We learn and gain experience by learning from someone who is more advanced than we are. It’s what Jesus modeled for us. This is a part of discipleship, and often times this can lead to feelings of insecurity because many of us feel like we don’t have the “emulating Christ” part down completely, so we question how we could help others grow intentionally. Jesus wasn’t giving this command to people that had it all figured out. He was constantly teaching the disciples *because* they didn’t have it all figured out. Remember some of His final interactions with His disciples: Peter denies Jesus [Matt. 26:69-74] and all the disciples fall asleep when Jesus asks them to pray in the garden [Matt. 26:36-44]. This shows us that Jesus gives the command to go and make disciples to imperfect people. We do not have to be perfect people to disciple others. Jesus knows His disciples short comings, and he know our shortcoming and He still commands us to “go and make disciples” [Matt. 28:19].

It is important to note that through the process of Jesus’ disciples going out and making disciples we see the vast expansion of the Church as we know it. Why is that? Because the command to teach them to observe all things that He commanded us [Matt. 28:20], includes the command to go and make more disciples [Matt. 28:19]. This is how Jesus established the Church. It is now our responsibility to make disciples, who make other disciples so that they Good News of Jesus can spread all throughout our community. We and are focusing locally this morning, but the desire is for His gospel to go to all nations and even to the ends of the earth [Matt. 28:19; Acts 1:8]. So we obey the command to make disciples, and teach them to obey the command to make more disciples.

3. Where do we make disciples?

A. **Where we live** [Prov.22:6; Jos. 24:15]

⁶ *Train up a child in the way he should go, And when he is old he will not depart from it [Prov. 22:6].*

¹⁵ *But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD [Jos. 24:15].*

Family Discipleship – God has placed us all in the families that we are in intentionally. Regardless of whether you are currently single, married with no children, married with young children, married with grown children, God has you in this season for a plan and a purpose. He has placed those around you intentionally so that you can make disciples.

Single people: You are part of a family. You are a child. You are a sibling. You are an aunt or uncle. You are grandchild. You are a cousin. You have family around you are called to love and push towards Jesus. God placed you in your family for a purpose: make disciples.

Parents of grown children: There is a tension and difficulty in discipling older children. They are adults and they are often out of your house making their own decisions. They may not give you the influence that you once had, and you may be left feeling like you missed your opportunity. Love them, listen to them, pray for them, and look for meaningful opportunities to share Jesus with them.

Parents of young children: We must take the discipleship of our children seriously [Prov. 22:6]. You do whatever you can to ensure that your children have a roof over their heads and have food to eat to meet their physical needs. And that is noble and good, but you cannot neglect their spiritual needs. We must be intentional with the spiritual development of the children that God has entrusted to us. They are sponges, learning and being shaped every single day by those around them and the content that they take in. They watch the model that you set for them, they need you to emulate Christ. But beyond that, they need you to lead them and guide them. They need you to pray for them. They need you to have real hard conversations with them. They need you to teach them what the Bible says so they can view the world they live in through a proper lens. We cannot simply drop them off at church or a Christian school and assume that others will disciple them. God has placed them in *your* care for a reason.

Husbands and wives: Help one another emulate Christ. Teach one another the things that God is teaching you. Help each other obey the commands of Jesus. Grow as a disciple individually, and help your spouse grow as a disciple as well.

B. Where we work, study, and play [Gal. 6:10a]

¹⁰ Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.

Let us do good to of our neighbors [Gal. 6:10, Matt. 22:36-40]. Our neighbors are not exclusively those who live in the apartment complex, neighborhood, or community that we live in. They are those who we work with, those where we study, those where we recreate. As we grow in our relationships with the people all around us, we should be striving to make disciples. It's the most loving thing that we can do.

Can you imagine how differently we would approach our jobs, universities, and hobbies, if we truly believed that God placed us in that context because there were people that needed to hear about Jesus and grow in godliness?

Let's make disciples where God has placed us.

C. Where we worship [Gal. 6:10b]

¹⁰ Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.

We are told that we are especially focus on doing good and loving those who are of the household of faith [Gal. 6:10b]. That means making disciples within the Church. We love those who are in the church.

We can meet new people and make them feel welcome and belonging here. We build relationships with people here to allow them to feel a part of this community, like it's a place that they want to me. It's a place that they want to return to.

We serve, build up, and teach those who are in the church. There is such a need for this, especially right now at this time. We need people who are willing to disciple kids, we need people who are willing to disciple youth, we need people who are willing to disciple young adults. We need people serving in these ministries.

We need people serving and emulating Christ to others on Sunday mornings. We need people to love others by serving refreshments, greeting them as they come in, showing them where to sit, leading neighborhood groups, helping with tech and production, serving on the worship team, and so many other place.

We just learned last week that we are each a member of the body of Christ [1 Cor. 12], and it is our responsibility to be contributing members of that body. When we come on Sundays or throughout the week, we should just be seeking to get something, but rather to use our gifts to build up the body; to make disciples by contributing.

We've all been given the command to make disciples. This was the final command and final piece of wisdom that Jesus shared with His disciples. This command is of the utmost importance for us. We must take the Great Commission seriously. A disciple is a follower of Jesus who is growing to love God supremely, love neighbors as themselves, and makes other disciples who do likewise. We make disciples by emulating Christ, evangelizing others, encouraging the gathering, and engaging believers intentionally. We make disciples where we live, work, study, play, and worship. So let's love God and love our neighbors BY making disciples who will make other disciples.

Study Guide Qs

Q1. From the 4 ways to make disciples we focused on (emulate Christ, evangelize others, encourage gathering together, and engage believers) which comes most naturally to you? And why?

Q2. From the 4 ways to make disciples we focused on (emulate Christ, evangelize others, encourage gathering together, and engage believers) which is most challenging for you? And why?

Q3. Share an experience of a someone who has helped you grow as a disciple?

Q4. What is one practical way you can take a step towards making disciples where you live, work, study, play, or worship?

“Digging Deeper” (optional or alternative study)

1. Here is an article on how to make disciples:

<https://www.cru.org/us/en/train-and-grow/help-others-grow/collaborative-discipleship/lessons/4c-how-to-make-disciples.html>

2. Here is a podcast on family discipleship:

<https://the-family-discipleship-podcast.simplecast.com/>

Love your neighbors (inside + outside the group) better:

- 1. Who would like to share how they sought to befriend or build relationships with their neighbors inside or outside the group?**
- 2. Are there some needs that can provide us an opportunity to love our neighbors inside or outside the group?**

Disciples who make disciples:

1. Who would like to share how they recently sought to make disciples?

2. Here is a disciple making idea to consider for the weeks ahead:

Have an intentional conversation about Jesus with someone where you live, work, study, play or worship.

Prayer [Loving God and Neighbors better]:

Close the NG meeting with a time of group prayer. Encourage each participant to pray, but don't force anyone to pray. Encourage the group to keep their prayers brief so that each person can pray.

Leader Notes:

- 1. Seek to involve as many group participants as possible.** A good group discussion time allows people to get to know the passage and one another better.
- 2. Feel free to pre-select the discussion questions that you want to focus on** in case there isn't enough time to answer them all.
- 3. The "Disciples Who Dig Deeper" section provides some optional or alternative study and discussion activities.** As a group leader, you can choose to focus on the "Disciples Who Dig Deeper" section, include part of that section in your group meeting, or not use it at all. Try to give the group sufficient notice so they can be prepared for the meeting.
- 4. Every time you meet consider asking:**
 - a. What about this passage is particularly exciting, challenging, or confusing?** If a leader is uncertain about a question of doctrine or theology don't hesitate to follow-up with your coach during the week. Then revisit the issue(s) when the group gathers next time.