

life groups' study guide

God's A Plan



Life Groups exist at Kingsway to provide authentic relationships for spiritual growth, caring for one another, and reaching out to others.

My dad once told me the story about a peculiar fisherman from Minnesota. You see, this fisherman was very well prepared. He knew how to fish. He had everything you need to be a good fisherman. He had poles, nets, bait, and even a really nice boat, but this fisherman had a problem. You see, for all his preparation he never caught anything. Not one fish. Not one, not ever. And you know why he never caught a fish? He never went fishing. He had all the knowledge and all the equipment, but he never got into the boat, he never left the dock.

Today's sermon from Matthew 28:16-20 is known as the Great Commission. This sermon asks the "what if" question. ***What if the members of this church truly believed that Jesus Christ has "all authority?" What if our membership observed all the things the Lord commanded His followers? What if every Christian in our congregation was to actually live in obedience to all the commands Jesus gave? What if every member commits to faithful attendance, sacrificial giving, witnessing, praising God, more prayer, ministry, disciple making.*** Can you imagine the consequences? Can we come close to conceiving the miraculous events that might occur at Kingsway? And it begins with you and me.

Jesus commands his disciples to "go and make disciples of all nations." This is an imperative phrase that Jesus uses. The word "imperative" is from the Latin word for command. There are many imperative statements in the Bible, more than enough to confirm that we are to be doing more than professing to be Christians and attending church every Sunday. In the Greek language he was emphasizing this little phrase, saying this is of great importance. Make sure you pay close attention to this.

Step One: Go. That's the first word of the Great Commission, and it's an imperative. It's the first step to taking the Great Commission seriously. "Go" implies an aggressive warfare. The Gospel army must move upon the nations. Not only is every saint commanded to *go*, or to take steps to make the gospel go, we are to teach *all things* he has commanded. (Genesis 31:15-17 - NKJV)

- *Where have you "gone" this week?*

Are you willing to go and make disciples of your neighbors across the street and across town, different though they may be? Very likely there are more people at home in your neighborhood on any given Sunday morning than there are at church.

- *Have you invited someone to church this week? This month?*
- *Have you introduced yourself to someone sitting near you that you do not know on Sunday morning service?*

We're told that 80 percent of folks visiting a church for the first time do so because someone they respected invited them to come, and then met them at the door.

Step Two: Make disciples.

What are the marks of a disciple?

One who abides in the words of Jesus - John 8:31

One who loves the brethren

One to be a doer of the Word – Matthew 7:21-25

One who bears much fruit – John 15:8

Notice the word "much" (also found in verse 5)

Jesus is not talking about an occasional good deed, but a lifestyle that prompts people to glorify God.

To be a disciple of Jesus means more than just a casual church member; it requires commitment to the teachings of Christ, the love of brethren, and bearing fruit. Well, here's the gist of it all: Jesus left us with a Great Commission: *Go and make disciples of all the nations*. To take it seriously,

- we have to be proactive, take the initiative, make the first move;
- we have to be disciplined by his teaching and example and share those disciplines with others;
- and we have to be willing to embrace those who are different, letting the love of Christ alone be the tie that binds us together as one.
- Was all this meant to be done by the Eleven men nearest to Him of the multitude then crowding around the risen Redeemer? Impossible. Was it to be done even in their lifetime? Surely not. In that little band Jesus virtually addressed Himself to all who, in every age, should take up from them the same work.

And we have the assurance of “all power in *heaven*”--the whole power of Heaven's love and wisdom and strength, “and all power in *earth*”--power over all persons, all passions, all principles, all movements--to bend them to this one high object, the evangelization of the world: All this “is *given unto Me*.” as the risen Lord of all, to be “*by Me placed at your command*.”

Well, don't just sit there. Go and make disciples ... in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

PRAYER:

Take my job and make it yours; Pounding nails or scrubbing floors.

Take my mind and make it one; With the purpose of your Son.

Take my occupation, Lord; Make it my vocation, Lord.

Let me show someone your way; When I go to work today.

I'll share the story of my Lord With whom I work in one accord.

And in my faith I'll do a deed; To help convince a friend in need.

I'll name your name, the name above all names, through which I make my claims.

Yes, take my occupation, Lord; Make it my vocation, Lord.

Postscript:

There are many more imperative statements in the Bible, more than enough to confirm that we are to be doing more than professing to be Christians and attending church every Sunday. Commands to be considered, action to be taken. How will we answer? Here are some biblical imperatives that we are called to act on –

Serve – Psalms 100:2; Psalms 2:11; Deuteronomy 10:12

Study – 2 Timothy 2:15

Come – Mt. 11:28

Acknowledge – Proverbs 3:6

Abide – John 15:4

Believe – Acts 16:31

Feed – John 21:15-17

Follow - Ephesians 6:1

Call on - 1 Corinthians 1:2

Delight - Psalm 37:4

Strive – Luke 13:24

Add – 2 Peter 1:5.