

Message Discussion Guide IMPACT . . . BY MAKING DISCIPLES

The Church at Brook Hills,

Dr. David Platt

February 15, 2009

Matthew 28:16-20

This guide is to help you facilitate discussion with your Small Group. Use it as a resource to lead your group in discovering and owning the truths of God's Word. There may be questions you do not want to use and there may be instances where you just want to focus on a particular point or truth. Some questions may bring out emotions and cause people to dwell on their relationship with God. Your role is to facilitate this experience not to complete the discussion guide. Use this as a flexible teaching tool not a rigid teaching task list.

Connect . . .

Use one or both of the following options to introduce the discussion time to follow.

Option 1

Invite learners to share about their own experiences of discipleship. Then ask the following questions:

- What have your experiences taught you about the meaning of discipleship?
- What did these experiences teach you about the purpose of your faith?
- What did these experiences teach you about the purpose of the Church?

Explain that today we're going to talk about Christ's command for disciple-making and how that command should affect His people.

Option 2

Invite learners to answer the following questions:

- What do people look for when searching to join a church?
- Which of these items important? Are they biblical?

Explain that today we will discuss how we can become a people that effectively make disciples.

Review the Message . . .

A Few Reminders About the Process of Church Membership...

We are not _____ consumers _____ shopping for the best product.
We are not _____ competitors _____ looking to compare with the church down the street.
We are a _____ community _____ passionate about advancing a Kingdom.

Application . . .

- How do we illustrate a consumer or competitor attitude regarding our ideas of church membership?
- What are the dangers in viewing church membership this way? How do these actions tear down the body of Christ?

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- How do we cheapen true biblical community when we view local churches as competitors or membership clubs?

We glorify Christ BY MAKING DISCIPLES of all nations.

The command is clear...

- Two words: MAKE DISCIPLES.
- Biblical community and biblical mission are inseparable.
 - Disciple-making is about sharing life in Christ.
 - Disciple-making is about multiplying the life of Christ.

Discussion...

- Enlist a volunteer to read Matthew 28:16-20. Highlight that the only command in the original language of this passage is “make disciples.”
- What is Christ’s command to His disciples?
- Explain that Christ invested approximately three years with His disciples before giving them this command. How does this relationship with His disciples demonstrate the relationship between community and disciple-making?

Application . . .

- How do we often misunderstand Jesus’ command?
- How do we often separate disciple-making and community? Why do we do this?
- How is community an integral part of disciple-making?

The command has been compromised...

- We are tempted to do everything except the one thing Jesus told us to do in the Great Commission.
 - Jesus never told us to...
 - Start Sunday School.
 - Form classes.
 - Create programs.
 - Construct church buildings.
 - Build colleges, universities, and seminaries.
 - Organize conventions.
 - Hold conferences.
 - Jesus did tell us to...
 - Make disciples in every part of the world.
- We have two options...
 - Self-directed strategies that hope for God’s blessing.
 - A Christ-directed strategy that is guaranteed God’s blessing.

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Discussion...

- What is Jesus' command in Matthew 28:19?
- Does He give instructions on how to make disciples?
- How did Jesus illustrate disciple-making with His life? What did He use to teach His disciples?

Application . . .

- Is there anything inherently wrong with the list of actions in the outline above? When are they appropriate?
- Why is it often easier for us to get involved with events and programs that take the place of biblical disciple-making?
- Why is it difficult for us to invest our lives into people?

The command in Christ...

- John 17:4 - "I have finished the work..."
 - In John 17, Jesus never mentions the miracles He performed or the multitudes to whom He preached, but over 40 times He mentions the men whom God had given Him out of the world!
 - Jesus' strategy was to revolutionize the hearts of a few and in the process turn the world upside down.
- Disciples cannot be mass-produced.
 - Jesus spent more time with his disciples than with everybody else in the world put together.
 - Jesus devoted himself to a few men, rather than the masses, so that the masses might be saved.
- People are God's method for winning the world to Himself.

Discussion...

- Enlist a volunteer (or a few volunteers) to read John 17. Explain that this passage is the beginning of Jesus' prayer for His disciples before the events of His crucifixion took place. In this prayer, Jesus mentions only His disciples and His work in them and through them.
- Based on this passage, what does Jesus indicate is the legacy of His work on earth?
- What was Jesus' plan to do with these few men? How was His relationship with them to affect their lives and the way that they lived in the world?

Application . . .

- How does Jesus' plan for His disciples look differently than the way that we often function in the church?
- How does the legacy that we desire to leave differ from Jesus'?
- What is the danger in having a focus on the shallow maturity of large amounts of people over deep maturity of a few people?
- Why do we often judge success on the number of people involved?

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The command in the church...

- Share the Word.
 - We go with confidence in the sovereignty of God.
 - We go living out the Gospel of God.
 - We go empowered by the Spirit of God.

Discussion...

- Read Matthew 28:18-20. What were the three ways that Jesus emphasizes in these verses for His followers to make disciples? (*go, baptize, and teach*)
- What is significant in the fact that Jesus told His disciples to go to others instead of bringing them to the temple?
- Jesus indicates that He is sending out His followers with His authority and His presence. How do these truths affect how His followers share the gospel with others?

Application . . .

- How does “going” to share the Word with others differ from our view of “bringing” others to someone else to share the Word?
- Why should this motivate us to learn how to share the Word?

- Show the Word.
 - The world longs to see a demonstration of Christ that accompanies our explanation of Christ.
 - Disciple-making is not about going to a class ; disciple-making is about sharing our lives .
 - We devote our lives to the process of disciple-making for others’ sanctification.
 - We are dependent on the process of disciple-making for our own sanctification.
 - Making disciples is living for the glory of God in others.

Discussion...

- Remind learners that baptism served as a demonstration of a Christ-follower’s decision to follow Him and to show that decision to the world. How did Jesus expect that demonstration to continue throughout His disciples’ lives?
- Invite two volunteers to read 1 Thessalonians 2:19-20, 3:6-8. What brought Paul great joy and glory? Why?

Application . . .

- How do we demonstrate the work of Christ and His Word in our lives on a daily basis? How do our lives draw others to Him?

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- How does having someone who watches you learn how to have a relationship with Christ motivate you to grow in Him?
- Teach the Word.
 - We are constantly receiving the Word.
 - We are subsequently reproducing the Word.

Discussion...

- What did Christ command His disciples to teach?
- Based on what Christ desired for His disciples to teach, what was His purpose in teaching them?

Application . . .

- As followers of Christ, what do we do with the biblical truths that we have been taught?
- Serve the world.
 - We lock arms with one another as we lay down our lives for the world.
 - Are we discipling or disinfecting Christians?
 - Disinfecting isolates Christians in a spiritual safety deposit box called the church building and teaches them to be good. This results in...
 - Decent church members with little world impact.
 - Disobedience to God's command to reach the entire world.
 - Wasted lives.
 - Discipling propels Christians into the world to risk their lives for the sake of others. This results in...
 - Disciples of Christ with total world impact.
 - Obedience to God's command to reach the entire world.
 - Abundant lives.
- The question we must constantly ask as the local church...
 - How can we most effectively make disciples of all nations?
- Based on the precedent of Christ and the pattern of the early church, the primary avenue for disciple-making to occur is in the context of small groups .
- We want to see small groups of disciple-makers all over the planet .

Discussion...

- Where did Jesus instruct His followers to make disciples? What does this command indicate about Jesus' desire for the nations?
- How is a blatant disregard to make disciples of all nations a sin?

Application . . .

- Considering all of the technology around us, what is hindering us from going to and making disciples of all nations?

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- What does one's unwillingness to go or apathy to care about the nations indicate about his own spiritual state?
- What are different ways that we can make disciples of all nations?

The question for the church member...

How are you going to multiply the Gospel with your life?

Application . . .

- Allow 10-15 minutes for your group to work on completing the "Personal Disciple-making Plan."
- Discuss how learners have thought about ways their lives can glorify Christ in their lives.
- Invite learners to share ideas, examples, or experiences of making disciples.
- Brainstorm ways that your small group can begin to impact all nations.