

***Making the  
Name of Jesus  
Known***

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***“Then Jesus came to them  
and said,***

***‘All authority in heaven  
and on earth has been  
given to me.***

***Therefore 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.***

***And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”***

***Matthew 28:18-20.***

## 0. Intro: *All Authority has been given to me*

This is the “Great Commission” that Jesus gave to his followers after his resurrection from the dead. From it, we learn that we are the way that God has chosen to spread the Gospel, or *good news*, throughout the world.

We learn that we are to **go** and to **make**.

We *go...everywhere*.

We *make...disciples*.

The process of making disciples, is usually thought of as one that begins at conversion and continues throughout a follower’s entire life.

But what’s implied in the Great Commission is that the process actually starts with people that *aren’t disciples*.

We get the opportunity to go and make *new disciples* of Jesus.

It’s about more than theoretical belief, more than just ‘not going to hell,’ it’s actually about becoming a new person, transformed by the message of Jesus, and taking him as your King.

It looks something like this...

### The Process of a Becoming a Disciple



### All Authority

The authority of Jesus is powering the Great Commission. It’s the energy behind it that propels it forward.

His authority gives the Great Commission power, weight, significance and meaning.

This mission can feel overwhelming and intimidating, but there is incredible power behind the command.

Here it is...

***“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.”***

That’s a lot of authority...

The phrase 'Heaven and Earth' is meant to encapsulate *everything* that there is for us. Jesus' authority extends to everything we can see, and everything we can't.

This commission comes at the end of the book of Matthew, after Jesus was crucified, but then, miraculously, became alive again. Through this miraculous resurrection from the dead, Jesus showed that he was *king* over everything in the world. Over sin, over death, over spiritual and human authorities. Jesus is *king*.

And out of this incredible authority, Jesus invites his followers to be the ones to tell the news, and announce his kingdom to the *entire world*. This kingdom, this way of life, this salvation is now available to *everyone*. Followers of Jesus get to partner with God in announcing incredible work! We're called to ***make the name of Jesus known***.

While primarily a joy, and privilege, sharing the Gospel is also difficult and costly at times. It's my heart, through this study, to listen in close to what the Bible has to say about what disciples look like, and what the great commission means for us. We will wrestle with the difficulties of how to share the Gospel in our distinctly post-Christian climate, and grab hold of what the Gospel is in its simplest form. We'll make space to be honest about our fears in sharing, and take hold of the promise and power that Jesus has behind our mission.

We'll approach this from a series of questions that arise from the text of the Great Commission in Matthew 28. Here they are...

**What is a Disciple?**  
**What does a Disciple Do?**  
**Where Do We Go?**  
**What Do We Share?**  
**How Do We Share?**  
**The Problem and the Promise (*I am with you*)**

Let's dive in...

**Discuss:**

What does the mean Great Commission to you right now? In what ways does it shape your life?

# 1. What is a *disciple*?

The first question we need to answer in all of this is, “*What is a disciple?*” This word is one of those that gets used a lot, but can be difficult to define.

## **Discuss**

How would you define *disciple*?

This is an important question because we’re called not only to be *disciples*, but to *make disciples*.

In order to figure this whole thing out, lets go back in time...

## **The Talmidim** (*Tal-mee-Deem*)

In Jewish culture, there were *Rabbis* (teachers) and *Talmidim* (disciples, students, apprentices). After primary school at home, or synagogue, elite students sought out a *Rabbi*. These *Rabbis* took teaching beyond the classroom, and taught through their *entire lives*. A *Talmidim* would go where their Rabbi went, ate what they ate, did what they did, and modeled their *entire lives* after their teacher. People longed to hear the call of a Rabbi, “Come and follow me.”

Jesus took on the role of a *Rabbi*.

He called followers (though they were far from the elite), traveled and taught, but he was unlike any other Rabbi before him, or any to come after.

Jesus was *God*, as well as being human.

He spoke with the authority of God, he healed the sick, raised the dead, and went to the cross for the sake of opening the way to forgiveness with God.

He’s king of the world. He’s God-with-us. So, in that way, he is unlike any other Rabbi, because he is also the savior-king.

When Jesus called his followers in Luke chapter 5, their reaction was incredible. Check it out...

*“They left everything and followed him.”*

They got up, stopped what they were doing, left their job, and everything else behind and followed Jesus. Because they wanted to. Because it was worth it.

It’s worth saying that not everything translates about their call to discipleship and ours. Our discipleship isn’t necessarily going to include leaving your tax collector job to sleep in the dirt, under the stars with the God-with-us. But it certainly means that everything is on the table. It certainly means that we will follow our *Rabbi* in whatever direction he leads us.

Jesus put it another way...

*“The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field.”  
(Matthew 13:44)*

This is our gut-reaction to finding Jesus’ way. Joyful willingness to “sell the farm” for the opportunity of a lifetime. Following Jesus’ way is of such insurmountable value that we’re *all in*.

So...

*Jesus is our Rabbi (teacher) to which we are his Talmidim (apprentice). We get to follow him around, be with him, seek to be like him, and do the things he did.*

### **Discuss:**

What did we just read? (Give bullet-points, paraphrase, whatever works for you).

How does the idea of the apprenticing ourselves to Jesus (*Talmidim*) help us understand being a disciple?

## **The Great Commission and Disciple-making**

Matthew 28:19-20 teaches that disciples are

1. Baptized in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit
2. Taught to obey everything Jesus commanded.
3. Instructed to make more *disciples* (not just converts).

### **Baptism**

Baptism is a symbol of death and new life. It is a statement of allegiance to Jesus. As you enter the waters, the old person is symbolically dead and as we rise, we are to be considered an entirely new person that raised into life in the Spirit of God.

In some cultures, this has meant being excommunicated from your family, shunned socially or persecuted publicly. While this is often not the case in the U.S, the significance remains, choosing to follow Jesus is an *all-in* decision.

It’s also significant that the we are baptized into the name of the Father, Son and Spirit. We are attached directly to the triune God.

Baptism is a practical, physical, spiritual, moment declaring a life-long decision to follow Jesus.

### **Obedience**

Jesus outlines a way of life for his followers that is incredibly unique and life-giving. It is essential that Jesus-followers not only *know* what Jesus commands, but *do* it. Because following Jesus is a specific way of life based on Jesus' teaching, in order to be his disciples, we must agree with Him and live life like he commands. Disciples are taught by other disciples to obey Jesus' teachings (Matthew 28:20).

### **Make Disciples**

Being a follower of Jesus doesn't just end with your own success and experience of following him. Disciples are instructed to go and make more disciples! While ultimately others will be Jesus' apprentices, we get to help other disciples along the way and "teach them to obey all I (Jesus) have commanded you." (28:20).

### **What does this all mean?**

To be a disciple of Jesus means to enjoy being with him.

It means studying how he lived and what he taught, and living in obedience to that way.

It means to be such a new, transformed person that the "old you" may as well be dead.

It means we are willing to trade everything else for the honor of following Him.

It means, by nature, we bring other people in on the joy of following Jesus.

All in all, through becoming disciples to Jesus, we are transformed to be more like him.

### **Discussion:**

Why are baptism and obedience such keys to being a disciple of Jesus?

What is the significance of baptism today?

### **Discipleship to Jesus vs Discipleship to People**

When we think of the word 'discipleship,' we often think of something regular, intentional, and formal.

People that might come to mind as well, like a middle or high school discipleship leader, a mentor, or even your current community leaders.

Here's the thing. There is nothing necessarily wrong with those thoughts, because those people are all functioning in a role that helps *disciple* you.

But, it can go wrong when we actually put *the responsibility for our growth* on the 'discipler' rather than ourselves.

So we need to understand a little bit more about the distinction between *discipleship to Jesus* and *discipleship to people*.

Here's the big idea...

***We are disciples of Jesus.***

***The responsibility falls on us to apprentice ourselves to Jesus, learn from him, and become his disciple.***

Also...

Each follower of Jesus is instructed to “make disciples” and to “teach them to obey all I (Jesus) have commanded them.”

So there’s some tension here... How do we take on the primary responsibility for our ‘discipleship’ to Jesus and not rely too much on other people for our growth, while also understanding that God has set up a system where disciples are instructed to teach each other?

Simply, the responsibility falls on us to take initiative to learn from Jesus.

And...

The responsibility falls on disciples to help teach other disciples to obey the commands of Jesus.

Here’s what it looks like...



Understanding that the **primary** responsibility of every believer is to be a disciple of Jesus also releases us from the pressure of feeling like we have to be solely responsible for someone else’s spiritual growth.

We can actually *enable* them by doing the work for them. But! Spurring them on, and teaching them is Biblically valid!

The idea of discipleship to Jesus is tough because we tend to want a teacher that is tangible and visible. It is much easier to latch onto a person that you respect and see regularly, than to a God who is physically unseen. But the reality is that, we are given the revelation of God in Scripture.

God has chosen to reveal himself primarily through the person of Jesus, and story of God in the Scriptures. So it's different. We learn about who he is, what he is like, how he acts, what he cares about and what he commands *through* the inspired authors of the Bible.

Knowing this clarifies how *incredibly important* it is to be in the Scripture, as this is God's chosen method of *revealing* himself. Jesus is the *embodiment* of God's revelation to us, but we get to learn about his character through seeing not just what he said, but *how* Scripture revealed his way of life.

On the other hand, the way that people in our lives spur us on towards Jesus can look different in different seasons of life. You're not entitled to a 'mentor'. Being intentionally mentored is an excellent thing to pursue, we even recommend it, but their absence in your life is not an excuse to stagnate in your growth. Our discipleship to Jesus is *our responsibility to pursue*.

The main point here is that our discipleship is *to Jesus*. Other people help us along, as instructed in Matthew 28, through teaching us to obey the commands of Jesus, but the responsibility to be apprentice ourselves to Jesus, ultimately falls on us.<sup>1</sup>

### **Discussion:**

What is significant about being a *disciple of Jesus*? As opposed to a *disciple of people*?

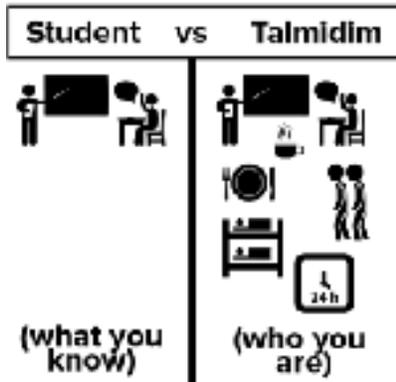
Take a look at what Paul says in 1 Corinthians 3. Paul's point takes the whole chapter to really understand, but make sure to give special attention to verses 3-9. As you read, what point is he making about being 'disciples of people?' How should we see it?

Can you think of any seasons of life that you've either taken too much responsibility for someone else's growth, or relied too heavily on someone else for your own spiritual growth?

Are you being actively disciplined by Jesus? (Are you learning to be like Him? Spending regular time with Him?)

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<sup>1</sup>It's important to note that God's Spirit is the one that empowers us to become 'sanctified' (more like Jesus) over time. But we can invite His work in our lives through obedience to Jesus, or prevent Him from working through sin. See 1 Peter 1:2, 1 Cor 6:11.



## 2. What Does a Disciple Do?

To conclude our basic conversation about what it means to be a disciple, let's turn our attention beyond what a disciple is "theoretically," and onto a few basic things that a disciple *does*.

James warns believers,

*"But don't just listen to God's word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves..." (1:22, NLT)*

The last section was mostly about developing a vision for who a disciple *is*. Identity stuff...

This section is about how that information-driven, 'identity stuff' translates into our everyday habits, activities, and actions.

### Discussion:

What does a Disciple of Jesus do? (Aka, what do you do?) What activities go along with that identity?

How do we grow as a Disciple of Jesus? What activities and habits contribute to this?

What does "being taught to obey the commands of Jesus" look like practically in your life?

### **Smaller Group Discussion**

Break into smaller groups of 2-4. The idea here is that everybody talks. Feel free to ask each other questions as you go along.

*It's important to be honest here. Real change only happens when we see ourselves rightly.*

What's your 'normal practice' for digging into God's word?

What's your normal rhythm of prayer like?

How's your work/rest balance going?

What are your priorities?

How are you serving?

What other practices contribute most to your growth (mentor, books, teaching, etc)?

### **Practice:**

Develop a weekly rhythm for yourself/in your smaller group to make sure you're consistently spending time with Jesus our Rabbi/King. It is also helpful to develop some monthly rhythms as well.

If you're unsure of where to start, start with the top few on each list. Move on from there. Scheduling is important. If you don't plan, and prioritize these things won't happen.

Weekly:

**Scripture reading -> meditation (reflection/application of Scripture) ->Prayer**

**Community/Intentional Relationships** (community group is part of this)

**Gathering with the entire church body** (Teaching, word, prayer, fellowship)

Sabbath

Being mentored

Sharing the Gospel

Self examination/journaling

Response through song

Teaching Others

Monthly/Occasional:

Reflection/goal setting

Fasting (from food, devices/media etc with the goal to hone your focus on God.)

Simple Living (Am I living a life singularly focused on Jesus, or are my possessions/pursuits distracting me?)

Forgiveness

Making Peace

Doing Justice

We will talk in depth about being a disciple, Spiritual Disciplines, and how we grow as Jesus-followers at the Young Adults Retreat in August!

For now, more resources are available at [practicingtheway.org](http://practicingtheway.org)

### ***New Rhythm for our Groups***

Because we value the regular spiritual health of our people, we will start asking these 'spiritual health' questions in our groups weekly. They reference the questions you asked in your smaller groups earlier tonight!

1. How's was your time with Jesus this week? In Scripture? In Prayer? Have you been able to make it to the church gathering lately?
2. How's your work/rest balance going? How are your priorities?
3. How are you serving?
4. How's the rest of life? How can we be praying for you?

These questions allow us to really spur each other on in our relationship with Jesus. It's *how we show each other in a practical way* that we care about each other's spiritual health.



### 3. Where do we go? (All nations)

#### TO PLACES WE ARE



#### TO PLACES WE MIGHT NOT GO OTHERWISE



#### Discussion:

How was your 'weekly rhythm' of discipleship last week?

What do you want to hone your rhythm for this next week?

#### 1. To the places we are

The primary place for sharing the good news of Jesus is wherever you are. God has given you a unique set of opportunities, relationships, interests and physical locations that you *are*. Where do you work or go to school? What relationships with family and friends do you already have, and what relationships *could you have*? Where do you hang out?

#### Discuss:

Where are you already?

Where do you spend most of your time? What are your most significant relationships?

What's your family like? What do you do for fun? Who are you closest with?

As a disciple, what is our mindset as we 'go' (matthew 28 language)?

How can we be intentional in the places we are?

What's the difference between you going to work, and you going to work as a disciple?

#### 2. To places we might not go otherwise

##### a.

If, for whatever reason, you don't have the right opportunities to share Jesus where you are, then *find a space* to share Jesus that already exists.

This could mean joining a soccer league, rock gym, movie club, running group, or community service initiative that *already exists*. It probably doesn't have the label "christian" on it.

Don't overthink it. Do something you enjoy. This can be incredibly effective if you do it *with* a few people from your community so that you're not alone.

**b.**

If the thing you're looking for doesn't exist, or if you have a compelling and unique vision for something new, create it!

Host a dinner, movie night, book club, coffee tasting, or whatever moves you. Do it with your community; the way we love each other will be the way that the world knows we're Jesus' disciples (John 13:35).

**c.**

Sometimes sharing the gospel will take us to neighborhoods, activities and countries that we might not have ever gone to otherwise. Being a follower of Jesus means that you might get to know people who you wouldn't have otherwise, go to neighborhoods you might otherwise avoid, and fly across the world to other parts of the world with the message of Jesus.

The goal here is that we would 'de-compartmentalize' our lives, so that we can see our day-to-day existence as people sent to bring the Good News.

### ***Go/Make Disciples of all nations***

**Discuss:**

Have you gone to any places that you wouldn't've without being a follower of Jesus?

What are the places you might not go without Jesus?

Do you feel like you might be called to join something, or creating something?

How can we "go together?"

**Practice:**

Pray through and identify some specific places God might be calling you to go, and people he might be calling you to reach.

### ***New Rhythm for our Groups***

Because we value sharing Jesus, we will take time in our communities each week to ask each other about the people and places we're in the process of "going" to.

The questions might look like this...

"How's sharing Jesus going?"

"Who can we be praying for that you're sharing with?"

"Can we go with you?"

The goal here is that our communities become the 'springboard' for evangelism. As we gather each week, we have the opportunity to encourage and help each other on our

mission of sharing Jesus with our city and beyond. Sometimes this will simply look like praying for the people we're reaching individually, and sometimes it will mean going together. Can you think of any other ways that your community can be a 'springboard' for sharing Jesus?

We'll add this to our list of Spiritual Health questions to ask each week.

### **Spiritual Health Questions:**

Break into smaller groups (not more than 4) so everyone has time to share. Take a respectful amount of time to go through these questions. Feel free to spend more time on some, and less on others on a given week. You probably won't be able to do all of them in detail. Make sure to respond in prayer at the end, thanking God for who he is, and what he is doing, and praying for each other.

1. How's was your time with Jesus this week? In Scripture? In Prayer? Have you been able to make it to the church gathering lately?
2. How's your work/rest balance going? How are your priorities?
3. How are you serving?
4. How's the rest of life? How can we be praying for you?
5. How's sharing Jesus going? Who can we Pray for? Can we help?

## 4. What do we share?

### **Discuss:**

How was your 'weekly rhythm' of discipleship last week?

Is there anything you want to hone your rhythm for this next week?

Our marching orders from Jesus are to

*"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations"*

But, how do we take someone who is not a disciple and make them a disciple?

*Don't they have to be converted before they can be discipled?*

This question is helpful because it re-clarifies what it really means to *share the gospel*, and *what our goals are in sharing*.

We are inviting people to align their entire lives with Jesus. To take him as their King whom they obey, their Rabbi whom they emulate, and their God whom they worship.

It's more than belief, more than just picking a team, or a side. It's something, that is supposed to be real, that demands our complete allegiance, and that changes every part of who we are.

Our goal is not just a one-time, get-out-of-hell-free prayer. Our goal is a heart that turns from its old way of life, responds with joy to the message of Jesus, and is ready to leave everything else to follow him.

This can practically look a lot of different ways, and doesn't by any means that we shouldn't pray with people to verbalize their commitment to follow Jesus

It does mean that choosing to follow Jesus is a big deal, and has serious implications that we shouldn't oversimplify to "get people in the door."

**Take a minute to write out what the simple message of the gospel is.**

**Discuss: Share your answers!**

### **The Simple Gospel**

When we use a phrase too often without defining it, it becomes an 'cliche.' Essentially, it loses its meaning to us because it's overused, and often, misused.

I think the phrase, 'sharing the Gospel' has become a cliché. It's not out of fashion, but it's become a bit ambiguous. How do we know when we've shared the gospel with someone? It can feel overly simple, or really complicated. Or both.

Is it a testimony?

Is it Romans Road?

"Jesus loves you."

"Jesus wants to save you from hell."

"Jesus wants a relationship with you?"

Throughout the book of Acts we see the gospel, or "good news," delivered in many different ways to different audiences on different occasions. It's important to note that though the approach is based on the people and situation, the essential message is strikingly similar.

*Though there's a lot to it, the message of the Gospel is incredibly simple.*

Read/scan through several passages in Acts and try to pick out the common threads in the message that the Apostles present. Make sure to note who he's speaking to (Jews/Gentiles) *What is the 'Simple Gospel'?*

Acts: 2:14-40 *Peter's Sermon at Pentecost*

Acts 4:1-12 *Peter and John before the Temple Council*

Acts 10:34-48 *Peter and the first Gentile believers.*

Acts 17 *Paul at Areopagus (Gentile audience)*

**Come up with a statement that succinctly encapsulates the Simple Gospel.**

## The Simple Gospel

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***Was put to  
death by  
the Jews***



***Willingly died to  
provide forgiveness  
of sin***



***God raised Him  
from the dead;  
He is King***

*Sample answer:*

The Jews put him to death, he died willingly to provide forgiveness of sin, and God raised him from the dead, he is creator and king of the world, repent and be baptized.

### **Practice:**

Share the simple gospel this week.

### **Spiritual Health Questions**

Break into smaller groups (not more than 4) so everyone has time to share. Take a respectful amount of time to go through these questions. Feel free to spend more time on some, and less on others on a given week. You probably won't be able to do all of them in detail. Make sure to respond in prayer at the end, thanking God for who he is, and what he is doing, and praying for each other.

1. How's was your time with Jesus this week? In Scripture? In Prayer? Have you been able to make it to the church gathering lately?
2. How's your work/rest balance going? How are your priorities?
3. How are you serving?
4. How's the rest of life? How can we be praying for you?
5. How's sharing Jesus going? Who can we Pray for? Can we help?

## 5. How Do We Share?

### *In Post-Christian, Progressive Oregon?*

Acts 17

Now this is the big question, isn't it?

While getting the *what* of the gospel is the most important part of sharing, it's usually more difficult to figure out *how* to share.

Our beautiful home Pacific Northwest is one of the least religiously affiliated corners of the United States. Have you heard people say things like, "I'm spiritual, but not religious," "Do what makes you happy," "I don't believe in anything," or "I used to go to church, but I'm past that now."

Not only that, but our culture has been called "post-christian." While that sounds... evolutionary, it just means that our culture is *reacting against* what they think "Christians" are. So followers of Jesus are specifically 'thrown under the bus' culturally, while other faiths are applauded, with an almost blind enthusiasm.

The reality is that many people are reacting this way because they haven't actually interacted with the real message of the gospel, just with something it prohibits. They might not have experienced followers of Jesus truly transformed by the message of the gospel.

I think that this moment in time we find ourselves in might actually be our best opportunity for sharing Jesus in some time. The way of Jesus is again *clearly counter-cultural*. Our culture cries out for justice and equality, and our God is the source of true right-living, justice, and equity. And He is at work to bring our world into true justice and peace.

So... How do we actually do this?

The answer is complex. Lots of ways.

We would hurt ourselves by limiting the moving of the spirit to a specific approach.

We'll talk about the core identities that Scripture gives us as we share the good news of Jesus.

### **Discuss**

What are some times that you've shared the gospel that you've seen God use?

#### **1a. Be a disciple**

If you don't know what the gospel has meant to you, how will you share it?

We've talked at length about what it means to be a disciple, and that's because it is the *foundation* for sharing Jesus. Our personal knowledge and experience of the goodness of God is the best starting point to share.

If you feel paralyzed, by what you don't know, it's important that we realize that the idea of *growth* implies that there are things that we still have to learn.

When we don't have an answer to a question, the pursuit of the answer to that question will typically yield **growth**.

When we don't have an answer to a question, but don't do anything about it, that breeds **apathy** and **doubt**.

Let's press in to know Jesus together.  
So that we might...

*"Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect."  
1 Peter 3:15*

### **1b. Share your life as a disciple**

If you are a disciple of Jesus, and His ambassador, your life will be overflowing with the gospel. Sometimes more than you will even realize.

You will be like "the salt of the earth." a flavorful, preserving agent.  
Or like a light set on a lamp stand that gives light to the whole room.

In short, if you're a disciple of Jesus, the gospel is going to shape every part of your life, and that will be difficult to hide. So don't hide it.

Share how you process difficult things in your life. Share how Jesus is challenging you to grow and change.

Some of the most powerful ways that I've been able to share how the way of Jesus is different is through how I respond when friends ask "How's being married?" "How's work going?" "What have you been enjoying lately?" "Why do you do that Sabbath thing?" "Why don't you get drunk?" "You're really tight with your friends from church." "You don't really talk down about them."

The answers to these questions all point to a life transformed through following Jesus. We're free to acknowledge our own weaknesses, rather than justify them.  
We're free to restore relationships rather than burn bridges.  
We're able to show faithful love to our friends and spouses.  
We're able to find forgiveness and restoration for the things that keep us up at night.  
Jesus has made us new, and is making us new.

**“You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.**

**Matthew 5:14-16**

### **Discuss**

Have you ever tried sharing the gospel through the way you see life as a disciple everyday?

How is our identity as a disciple tied in to *how* we share?

### **2. Be an ambassador**

Remember back to the verse we read in 1 Peter 3:15?

We're supposed to be prepared to give anyone an answer for the hope we have in Jesus. This is a verse that gets quoted a lot, but there's a description of how we are to share. "With gentleness and respect."

Gentleness and respect are related to an interesting title that God gives us. Along with being *disciples*, we are also *ambassadors*.

*“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God. God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God”*

*2 Corinthians 5:17-20*

Our identity as ambassadors is absolutely key to becoming effective in sharing the gospel.

Dr. Darrel Bock puts it excellently,

“An ambassador gets ‘out and about’ and seeks to represent their country on the soil of another country.”

By nature, ambassadors make peace and seek common ground with other parties, though always representing their country.

This is a key attitude for us as we go as representatives of the Kingdom of Heaven in a world that lives in darkness.

As we go, let's do it with gentleness and respect.

### **Discuss**

How does the identity of “ambassador” shape our mindset in the way we share the gospel?

What's one way you could hone your approach to sharing out of this identity?

### **3. Pray**

*“Short time or long--I pray to God that not only you but all who are listening to me today may become what I am, except for these chains.”*  
Acts 26:29

Paul's attitude here is one for us to learn from. We get to combine asking God to move in the hearts of all people, and we get the privilege of being His primary messengers to bring the gospel to the world. Our prayers for people to come to know Jesus are strengthened by a willingness to act.

The great news here is that the body of Christ is big! We're not the only messengers out there, and sometimes God will use multiple people to bring his message to one person.

We know that God is moved by the prayers of His people, and there's no better way to approach it than, “Lord save them, and here I am, send me!”

### **4. Tips and tricks:**

Here are some additional ‘tips and tricks’ to help with the ‘how’  
Eric Knox, sums up our answer to the question of “how do we share?”

*“There are many roads to Jesus and Jesus is the one way to God”*

What he is implying here is that each person comes to understand the gospel in a unique way.

### **Eat/drink with those far from God.**

Jesus did. Luke 5:27-31.

### **Go with your community**

It's one of the best ways to show how Jesus-followers live.

It's also helpful to stay "in the world, but not of"  
John 13:34-35  
John 17:14-18

### **Know your audience**

Think back to the study we did in Acts about how the disciples shared the Gospel. They approached Jews and Gentiles differently. They didn't change the simple message of the Gospel, but they took very different approaches based on who they were talking to. Every person has a different background, perception, culture, struggle and set of values. As wise servants we can connect the gospel to those differences. To reach people across different cultures, you need to work to understand the culture you're reaching.

### **See people who disagree with you as the goal, not the opponent**

Our struggle is happening on a spiritual level. We want to see people come to a life-giving knowledge of Jesus. They might not be there yet.  
Ephesians 6:12 (the rest of the passage is helpful in equipping us).

### **Discuss:**

Are there any other 'tips and tricks' you would add to this list?  
What other qualities have you found helpful as we share the gospel in our city?

### **Long Game/Short Game**

*Read Acts 26:1-32*

There's a funny moment in this story where Agrippa asks Paul,

*"Do you think that in such a short time you can persuade me to be a Christian?" (v28)*

It's a funny question, he's scoffing at the presumption Paul is making that he could convince him that Jesus is the way in such a short time!

This brings up an excellent question though...

Should we take the longer, relational approach to sharing Jesus, or should we play the shorter game?

Paul simply responds,

*"Short time or long—I pray to God that not only you but all who are listening to me today may become what I am, except for these chains." (v29)*

This is an incredible lesson for us that there's not necessarily one right answer for every situation. The response of the person might dictate the whether we play the long or

short game. Paul, in the book of Colossians instructs us to “Make the most of every opportunity.” (4:5) The point is... Share!

**Questions for Discussion:**

What’s one thing that’s challenged you about *how* we share?

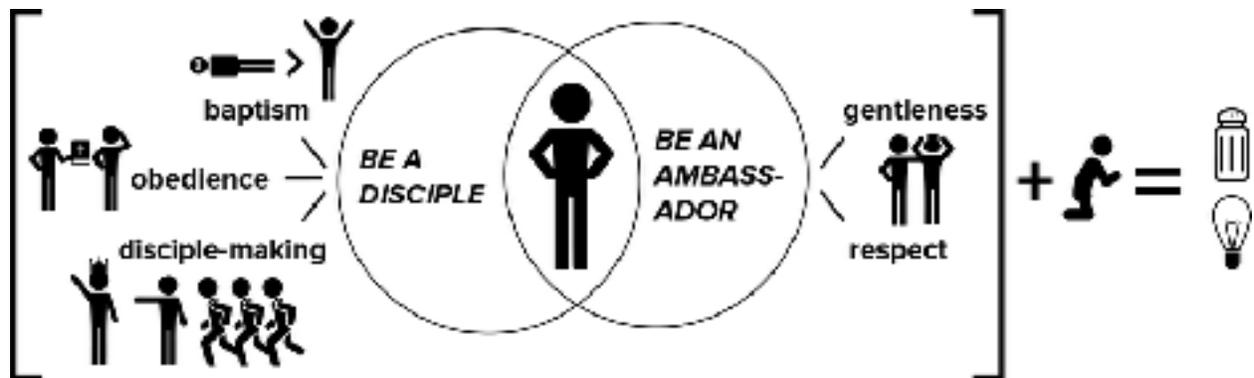
**Practice:**

Spend time in prayer this week about how Jesus might be leading you to grow in *how* you share.

**Spiritual Health Questions**

Break into smaller groups (not more than 4) so everyone has time to share. Take a respectful amount of time to go through these questions. Feel free to spend more time on some, and less on others on a given week. You probably won’t be able to do all of them in detail. Make sure to respond in prayer at the end, thanking God for who he is, and what he is doing, and praying for each other.

1. How’s was your time with Jesus this week? In Scripture? In Prayer? Have you been able to make it to the church gathering lately?
2. How’s your work/rest balance going? How are your priorities?
3. How are you serving?
4. How’s the rest of life? How can we be praying for you?
5. How’s sharing Jesus going? Who can we Pray for? Can we help?



 <p><b>eat + drink together</b></p>	 <p><b>go with your community</b></p>	 <p><b>know your audience</b></p>	 <p><b>see others as the goal</b></p>
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## 6. The Problem and the Promise *(I am with you)*

Aside from the unique cultural challenges that we face in our world, the largest obstacles that we face likely come from within ourselves. When I search my own heart about the mission Jesus has given us, I fear what it will cost me.

Will it cost me my reputation?  
My image?

Will people reject not only Jesus, but me as a person, because of him?

What if I fail? Have I failed God?

How do I even bridge the conversation to something so 'taboo?'

The list goes on...

When we are 'in the moment' making the decision to share or to not, these are the things that most often make it difficult and intimidating to share the good news.

The difficult truth is that following Jesus will sometimes *cost us*. Sometimes we will be rejected, sometimes persecuted and sometimes, the people who our hearts break for, will choose not to follow Jesus, despite our best efforts.

After John 3:16 "For God so loved..."

Comes John 3:19

*"This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil."*

While this is heartbreaking, both to our hearts and God's, we can take joy that God's purpose is John 3:18

*"For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him."*

### **Discuss**

What's the biggest obstacle(s) for you to sharing your faith? Fear? Rejection? Feeling unprepared? Like you'll fail God? Something else?

## **Redefining Success**

*Acts 28*

It's important to remember that even when Paul preached, some believed and some reacted negatively, even violently to his message. At the end of Acts, we get an almost haunting message quoted from the prophet Isaiah

*“Go to this people and say,  
“You will be ever hearing but never understanding;  
you will be ever seeing but never perceiving.”  
For this people’s heart has become calloused;  
they hardly hear with their ears,  
and they have closed their eyes.  
Otherwise they might see with their eyes,  
hear with their ears,  
understand with their hearts  
and turn, and I would heal them.”*

This quotation sums up the unfortunate reaction of so many through people throughout history. Though God has made himself known, though the good news has been preached, there will be some that hear, but don't understand. Some have seen God's work, but have not perceived it. God's healing has come close to them, but they are unable to realize that it is so.

You and I are not responsible for the ultimate response of people to the good news of the gospel. We are responsible to “have an answer for the good news that lies within us.” We are responsible to deliver the message “marked with grace and seasoned with salt.” (Col 4:5)

But we've been promised that if the world hated, and rejected our Messiah, we will encounter the same (John 15:18).

At the same time, Jesus has deemed blessed those who are rejected and persecuted.

*“Blessed are you when people hate you, when they exclude you and insult you and reject your name as evil, because of the Son of Man.”  
Luke 6:22*

Our call, regardless of response, is to go and proclaim the name of Jesus as Savior, Lord and King.

## **Discuss**

How do we process the moments that we've been rejected or persecuted because of the Gospel? What comfort does Jesus offer?

Is this different than what you thought?  
Is it refreshing?  
Is it scary?

### **I am with you... *always***

Ok, that was a downer, right?

I can't believe you kept reading! Good work. That's commitment!

The end of the Great Commission is probably my favorite part.

Let's review... And for fun, we'll back up in the text a bit...

*"Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore 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. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."*

I think that's my favorite part.

*"And surely I am with you, always."*

*"to the very end of the age."*

The Great Commission is like a sandwich...

It starts with Jesus' authority. That's the motivation and power that his followers walk in.

In the middle there's the command. Go/make disciples from everywhere. Tell them the news!

And the promise that you and I get to walk in is that Jesus will be *with us*.

That power, assurance, comfort, and promise is *life-changing*.  
How would you share Jesus differently if he was standing in the room?

For followers of Jesus, the Holy Spirit is the living, presence of God that dwells in us. Jesus even said that it was better that he left and the Holy Spirit came (translation: *big deal*).

The reality is when we hear the call of Jesus, and walk in obedience to his commands about sharing the good news with people far and wide (and near), we live in the center

of his blessing. No matter the circumstance, no matter the result. He has promised to be with us to calm our deepest fears and provide us the boldness we need to share about his great name.

The Holy Spirit will lead and guide us as we speak.

So speak out of love for your savior, Jesus.

So speak out of your life transformed by your *Rabbi*, Jesus.

So speak out of the authority of your king, Jesus.

And speak in the knowledge that the Spirit of God is *with you*.

And share the news our world is aching to hear.

### ***Let's Make the Name of Jesus Known***

*That's our practice from here forward.*

#### **Discuss**

What does the Great Commission mean to you now?

Think back on what you answered on week 1.

How does the *power* and *promise* of Jesus change how you share the Gospel?

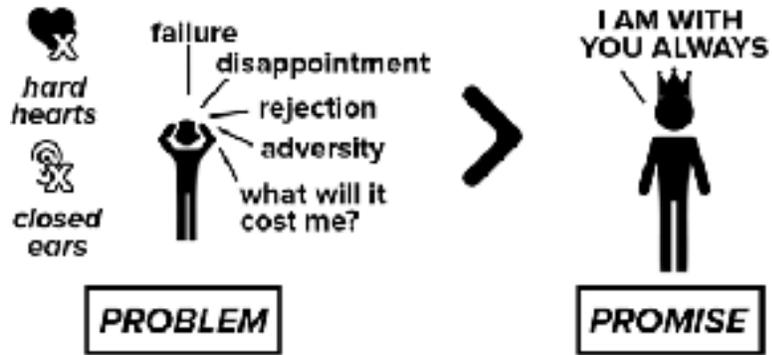
How can your group keep supporting each other in sharing the Gospel?

As we move forward, how can we keep valuing this together?

#### **Spiritual Health Questions**

Break into smaller groups (not more than 4) so everyone has time to share. Take a respectful amount of time to go through these questions. Feel free to focus on one or two each week. Don't feel like you need to all of them in detail every time. End your time responding in prayer, thanking God for who he is, and what he is doing, and praying for each other.

1. How's was your time with Jesus this week? In Scripture? In Prayer? Have you been able to make it to the church gathering lately?
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### The Great Commission Sandwich

God-given authority

The Great Commission

Power of the Spirit

***“Then Jesus came to them  
and said,***

***‘All authority in heaven  
and on earth has been  
given to me.***

***Therefore 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.***

***And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”***

***Matthew 28:18-20.***