

The Teacher and a Fresh Look at Great Commission

“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations....Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen” (Matthew 28:19-20).

Objectives:

At the conclusion of this lesson the participant will be able to accomplish the following:

1. Identify the big idea (main verb) of the Great Commission.
2. Explain the value of teaching in the local church and the church at large.
3. Express how we expand and deepen the kingdom of God.
4. Reveal the disciple-making formula of the Great Commission.
5. Explain the continuous cycle of teaching contained in this lesson.
6. Articulate an understanding of the meaning of a disciple.
7. Understand the ministerial responsibility connected with teaching found in 1 Timothy 3:2.

Introduction:

Ravi Zachariah in *A Life of Integrity* tells a simple parable that makes an excellent point.

A prosperous man was making a long journey. In his bag he packed all his valuable jewels and money. A thief started to follow him, pretending to be a friend, and waiting for the opportunity to steal the wealthy man's riches.

The rich man was aware of the man's motives and thought of a plan. Each night as he would stop at a local hotel he would invite the thief to share the room.

Once inside the rich man would say, “Here is a towel. You go and wash up for the night.”

While the thief took his shower the rich man hid his treasures.

When the thief returned to the room, the rich man would go and bath. While away, the thief searched frantically for the riches. He looked in the rich man’s luggage, searched the closet, drawers, under the bed, between the mattresses, and under the rich man’s pillow. The treasure could not be found.

At the end of the journey, the rich man boarded a train to go home. He called out to the thief, “I know why you have been following me. You’ve been trying to steal my treasures. Each night you have looked in my bags, searched the closet, rummaged through the drawers. You’ve looked under my bed, between the mattress, and even under my pillow. The one place you never looked was under your own pillow. The treasure was closer than you thought!”

We treasure:

1. Church Growth
2. Revival
3. Prosperity
4. Spiritual maturity

Those treasures are closer than you think. They are at your immediate disposal for your instantaneous use.

Ron Libby recently said in one of his sermons:

- We expand the kingdom through evangelism.
- We deepen the kingdom through discipleship.

The Big Idea:

Jesus, in His earthly ministry, was frequently addressed as “Teacher.” Teaching was one of His priorities. Nicodemus said, “...We know that thou art a teacher sent from God” (John 3:2). Almost correct: He was **God who came to teach**. Jesus possessed a determination to transform hungry hearts and could make a classroom out of any setting.

Sometimes it seems the teaching ministry is becoming lost or minimized in the church locally, not to mention the church at large as well. Teaching is being neglected, ignored, and many times abandoned in the midst of fewer weekly services, shorter services, and high powered services.

One of the first things I learned when becoming a Christian over thirty two years ago was this: teaching had a reputation of being boring. If a visiting preacher came to our church and he was boring, people would say, “Oh, he’s a teacher.” Good preachers are called preaching machines, fireballs, and so forth. I wonder what good teachers are called. Some teachers forget that God’s Word is good news. They teach in such a way that it is neither good, nor news.

Teaching is the revival ministry of the apostolic church. The pastor guards the flock from false doctrine. Teaching grounds (deepens) them in truth and promotes spiritual growth and maturity. A sampling of a few Scriptures solidifies this:

“Then we will no longer be immature like children. We won't be tossed and blown about by every wind of new teaching. We will not be influenced when people try to trick us with lies so clever they sound like the truth. Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church” (Ephesians 4:14-15).

“Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away” (Psalms 1:1-4).

“Study this Book of Instruction continually. Meditate on it day and night so you will be sure to obey everything written in it. Only then will you prosper and succeed in all you do” (Joshua 1:8, NLT).

Therefore, teaching and spiritual maturity are part of the spiritual growth core values of theological education and should be fundamental in our local churches as well.

Face it:

- Nations don't start Bible schools because they don't see the value of teaching and making disciples.
- Churches don't have new converts courses because they don't see the value of teaching and making disciples.
- Churches don't have Sunday schools because they don't see the value of teaching and making disciples, from birth to the grave.
- Members don't come to Bible school because they don't see the value of learning.
- Pastors don't send God-called students to Bible schools because they don't see the value of teaching and making disciples.

Someone has forgotten, neglected, abandoned or ignored: “I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding” (Jeremiah 3:15).

The Great Commission:

The Great Commission is the one of the most significant passages of Scripture, for two reasons:

- It is considered to be the last personal instruction given by Jesus to His disciples. It is the marching orders for all followers.
- It is a special calling from Jesus Christ, to followers, to take specific, deliberate action while on earth.

Part of our vision, within the global missions efforts, of the United Pentecostal Church International is to send the message and to train the messenger. Both of these aspects are firmly implanted in the Great Commission and fulfill our desire to effectively train people in effectively handling the Word of God.

In Matthew 28:19, which we know as the Great Commission, we find four verbs, namely:

- Go
- Make disciples (Teach)
- Baptize
- Teach

Ever notice the main verb (some say it is the only verb) of the Great Commission? It is imperative, crucial, urgent, and very important. Due to our familiarity with the English translation, we commonly suppose that the main verb is "go." In Greek, the language that the New Testament was written, there are different types of verbs. This helps distinguish between the main verb and auxiliary verbs. In the Greek the main verb here is the word "disciple." In the KJV it says, "teach." The main action verb in the Great Commission is "teach." It is a command. Many English translations say "make disciples." That is our task: to make disciples. That is the core of the great commission.

Therefore, the great commission is:

DISCIPLE
 ... by going
 ...by baptizing
 ...by teaching

Or the Great Commission sounds like this:

DISCIPLES,

 DISCIPLE
 ... as you are going
 ... as you are baptizing
 ... as you are teaching

Based on Matthew 28:18-20, we can derive the following disciple-making formula:

Go
+ Baptize (Evangelize)
+ Teach (Educate)
= Make Disciples (Mature Follower of Jesus Christ).

Most sermons put the emphasis of the Great Commission on the word "go" rather than "teach" or "make disciples." It seems that what we value is "going." "Going" is certainly important but it is not the main point of the Great Commission. It must be included if all nations are to be reached. This lesson is not an effort to downplay going into the entire world. It merely is designed to highly the neglected component of the great commission. It is not an either/or scenario. Both should be done.

Jesus tells us what to do (disciple) and how to do it.

- Go
- Baptize
- Teach

That doesn't mean the other components are unimportant. It only means that each one of them is necessary to fulfill the command of making disciples. "Go" is the driving force of the imperative. It is impossible to fulfill the command to "make disciples" without going. But, it is possible to go without making disciples. Some speak of a "great crusade." A crusade cannot be considered to be great unless disciples were made.

"Jesus came and told his disciples, I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:18-20, NLT).

In the Greek society a disciple was a person who submitted himself to a gifted teacher. A disciple is someone that believes and practices the teachings of another and is involved in the process of life transformation.

A disciple is a student; a learner. But he is more than just a learner. He is a disciplined follower. He is one who has dedicated his life to follow the teachings of his master. Jesus said we are to teach His disciples to "observe" (or obey) everything He has commanded us. Discipleship begins with obedience (Luke 6:46; John 14:15, 23-24). George Barna explains the Great Commission is not primarily about evangelism, it is about discipleship. I think it contains both. You cannot have one without the other. However, the emphasis is on making disciples. This is best accomplished through teaching.

Notice that disciples reproduce themselves by training other disciples. 2 Timothy 2:2 is very close to this understanding as well. That commission represents a continuous cycle.

<p>Teach them to win them.</p>	<p>"I will teach transgressors your ways" (Psalms 51:13).</p> <p>"So he began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Aquila and Priscilla heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately" (Acts 18:26, NKJV).</p>
<p>Teach them to keep them.</p>	<p>"Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6).</p> <p>"But you must remain faithful to the things you have been taught. You know they are true, for you</p>

	<p>know you can trust those who taught you. You have been taught the holy Scriptures from childhood...All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work" (II Timothy 3:14-17, NLT).</p>
<p>Teach them to build them.</p>	<p>"As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby" (I Peter 2:2).</p> <p>"If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard... (Colossians 1:23).</p> <p>"I am now entrusting you to God and to his message that tells how kind he is. That message can help you grow and can give you the inheritance that is shared by all of God's holy people" (Acts 20:32, GOD'S WORD).</p> <p>"You have been believers so long now that you ought to be teaching others. Instead, you need someone to teach you again the basic things about God's word. You are like babies who need milk and cannot eat solid food. Solid food is for those who are mature, who through training have the skill to recognize the difference between right and wrong" (Hebrews 5:12, 14, NLT).</p> <p>"Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord" (Ephesians 2:19-21, NKJV).</p> <p>A church built only on evangelism is very long but is short and not elevated. A church build on evangelism and training is both long and high. It</p>

	becomes a giant that the world cannot conquer. (Illustrate this on white board or in a graphic.)
Teach them to send them.	“And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also” (II Timothy 2:2).

Conclusion:

The Great Commission called for the discipleship of the nations. It was not merely about making converts but disciples. We not only evangelize, we educate.

J. I. Packer in *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God* (pages 48-49) asserts that it is through teaching that a preacher is best able to fulfill his or her ministry. He claims that teaching the gospel, to condense it to its simplest essentials, and to consider it point by point, is the preacher’s first responsibility.

“When Paul preached the gospel, formally or informally, in the synagogue or in the streets, to Jews or to Gentiles, to a crowd or to one man, what he did was teach—engaging attention, capturing interest, setting out the facts, explaining their significance, solving difficulties, answering objections, and showing how the message bears on life.”

“Clearly, in Paul’s view, his first and fundamental job as a preacher of the gospel was to communicate knowledge—to get gospel fixed in men’s minds. To him, teaching the truth was the basic evangelistic activity; to him, therefore, the only right method of evangelism was the teaching method.”

What is it that every minister of the gospel should have in common? That is the ability to teach God’s Word. I look specifically at I Timothy 3:2 here. Most translations either say “apt to teach” or “able to teach.” A few others say that the minister should have “the gift for teaching” (Weymouth); be “good at teaching” (World English Bible); be “a teacher” (Douay-Rheims Bible); “must know what he is talking about” (MSG); and be “a ready teacher” (BBE). No matter which way you look at it, God is calling you to be a teacher. What are you waiting for? Go and teach...

Review:

1. How do we expand the kingdom of God? _____
2. How do we deepen the kingdom of God? _____
3. What did Nicodemus call Jesus in John 3:2? _____
4. According to this lesson what is the revival ministry of the apostolic church?

5. How was the statement made by Nicodemus almost correct?

6. What did God promise in Jeremiah 3:15?

7. Why is the great commission one of the most significant passages in Scripture?

8. In the Greek, what is the main verb of the great commission?

9. What would be considered to be the core of the great commission?

10. What would be considered the major task of the great commission?

11. What is the disciple-making formula found in this lesson?

12. What is a disciple?

13. Where does discipleship begin?

14. A disciple is involved in what process?

15. How do disciples spiritual reproduce themselves?

16. What is the continuous cycle of teaching mentioned in this lesson? Provide a scriptural reference for each.

17. What does J. Packer say is the best way for a preacher to fulfill his/her ministry?

18. What is it that every minister of the gospel has in common?

19. What is a qualification of the minister (1 Timothy 3:2) related to teaching?

20. What does J. Packer say is the preacher's first responsibility?
