

Making a commitment to follow Jesus should not be taken lightly. Jesus Himself warns those who want to be disciples that they must count the cost.

If a disciple must deny themselves, take up their cross and follow Jesus, what would make anyone want to do that? If we must sacrifice autonomy for servitude, and accept a path of suffering for the sake of the Gospel, what will it benefit us? Why can't we share the power and the glory and skip the hard parts?

These are the difficult questions that we will either ask ourselves, or be asked by others, when we commit our lives to Jesus. The answer is, that narrow road is a hard path, but it leads to life. We become citizens of the kingdom of God, even as we share in Christ's suffering, humility, misunderstanding and rejection. Wherever we go, we are called to be carriers of the Gospel. Our life is a witness to the goodness and love of God, by what we say and how we live.

Try it! How would you explain the Gospel to someone who doesn't know Jesus? What is your testimony of God at work in your life?

WRAP-UP

Jesus calls us to live fully alive in Him—not simply as people who believe, but as people whose lives reflect His love, truth, and grace. Following Jesus means becoming more like Him, allowing our words, actions, relationships, and choices to point others toward God. We are not called to do this in our own strength or alone; Christ gives us His authority, equips us through His people, and promises to be with us always. As we grow in faith, pursue unity, embrace the cost of discipleship, and share what God is doing in our lives, we become living examples of the Gospel. Our greatest opportunity to make disciples may simply be to live in such a way that others see Jesus in us.

MEMORY VERSE

19 Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. 20 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 28:19-20 NLT

Challenge – Wondering about your Spiritual Gifting? Take the 5 fold Ministry test to identify your strengths. <https://fivefoldministry.com/>

Carry the Gospel Awake – Week 5

INTRODUCTION

This week we conclude our Fall series (Awake - Living Fully Alive in Jesus), by looking at the final commandment Jesus gave to His disciples. We often refer to it as the Great Commission. Jesus' parting instructions to His followers was to go and make disciples. Many of us are intimidated by the thought of making disciples. We probably have visions of evangelists, or street preachers, or maybe door to door visits handing out pamphlets. So, this study considers how we might make disciples by what we say and do.

Ice Breaker

Who was your role model growing up (real or fictional)? Someone you wanted to be like and tried to emulate?

Key Passage

18 Jesus came and told his disciples, "I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. 19 Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. 20 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

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. The Great Commission

Our key verse contains Jesus' parting instructions. He tells His disciples to make disciples. But to make a disciple we need to know what it means to be a disciple. A disciple (Gr. *mathētēs*) is a pupil or someone who follows another's teaching. Jesus made that clear when He said, "teaching them to obey all the commands I have given you."

Jesus had been their teacher, and now He was telling His disciples to be the teachers of others. Specifically, they were to teach everything He had commanded them to do. What were some of the things that Jesus had commanded His disciples to do? By what means do you think they would teach those things to others?

Jesus' final command would ensure that His new disciples would also carry on making more disciples. We are the fruit of that final command because Jesus' followers throughout time have continued to make disciples, who make disciples. And we are called upon to carry that command forward to the next generation of followers.

Verse 19 begins with "therefore" and so we look back to verse 18 to see the reason, or the therefore, Jesus is referring to.

What is the basis upon which we are to make disciples? How does baptism "in the name of" the Father, Son and Holy Spirit recognize the authority we are under?

Let's not misinterpret this. We are not called on the make "good people based on our own ability". We are followers of Jesus, given His power and authority to teach others to be followers of Jesus. Perhaps most importantly is Jesus' final statement as He sent them out - "I will be with you always." We aren't sent in our own authority and power, and we are not sent out alone. We are Christ's ambassadors and He accompanies us everywhere we go.

2. Equipping

11 Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. 12 Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ. 13 This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God's Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ. - Ephesians 4:11-13 NLT

In his letter to the Ephesians Paul doesn't say, "Here are the most important positions in the church, you need to respect them." He says, "I have given the church these five positions." We need them. They are His gift to His people because they serve important functions in the body of Christ.

- Apostle- literally "one sent forth", an ambassador of the Gospel
- Prophet - a proclaimer of a divine message
- Evangelist- preacher of the gospel, heralds of salvation through Christ
- Pastors – shepherds who guide as well as feed the flock (congregation)
- Teachers- one who gives instruction in the things of God, and duties of man

What are the responsibilities of all those who are apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers (v. 12)? When we are quipped to do God's work when we are fully prepared for service and ministry. What type of service or ministry do you feel called to? Is there anyone who is supporting you to prepare you for those areas?

Jesus is not focused on individuals or even His twelve closest companions in this passage. He is providing for the care of all believers as He raises up these five positions in service to the church.

3. Unity and Maturity

4 You are coming to Christ, who is the living cornerstone of God's temple. He was rejected by people, but he was chosen by God for great honor. 5 And you are living stones that God is building into his spiritual temple. ...- 1 Peter 2:4-5a NLT

Paul also says these five positions are responsible to build up the church, the body of Christ. He isn't referring to a literal building, but to God's people who form "the church." In 1 Peter 2:5 we are called living stones of a spiritual temple. But for a building to be sound, the stones must be fitted together properly. When Christ's church is properly built, the stones are shaped into a unified whole.

What have you noticed that's preventing unity in the church today? Is there anything in your life that has created division between you and a fellow believer? What might be the first step towards reconciliation and restored unity in that relationship?

We are also growing in the knowledge (*epignōsis*) of God's Son. This word implies a precise and correct knowledge.

How would you describe the main message of God's Son? How can you increase your understanding of that message?

4. I Want to Be Like Jesus

23 Then he said to them all: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. 24 For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will save it. - Luke 9:23-24 NIV