



NG Study Guide: Matt. 28:16-20 "The King's Commission" [10.817]

Love God + know the Bible better:

1. Read the passage cited above, and try to answer the questions below before your group meets.
2. **Leader note:** *Please review the brief instructions for leaders at the bottom.*

The Study

Thesis: The King's commission or Great Commission provides the essence of the mission for all of Jesus' disciples. Throughout Matthew's gospel we've discovered Jesus' invitation to become citizens of His kingdom. The values and benefits of the kingdom of heaven, or kingdom of God, have been contrasted with the values and benefits of this world. God's kingdom is available to those who choose to make Jesus their king. Today, we'll discover three traits of Jesus' disciples, or those who've made Christ king.

1. Obey Jesus [16] "Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had appointed for them." There were eleven disciples as Judas was no longer among them. They went to the mountain at the Galilee where Jesus told them to go. This may have been the same hill where Jesus delivered the Sermon on The Mount. Jesus had promised in the Upper Room that He would go before them to the Galilee [Mt. 26:32]. The angel at the empty tomb told the women to tell the disciples to meet Jesus at the Galilee [Mt. 28:7]. And here we see the disciples obeyed Jesus' instruction.

Why should you obey?

1. Jesus gave his life for you so that you can live with God.
2. Jesus has all authority in heaven and on earth [18]. He is Sovereign.
3. Jesus is manifest to those who obey Him [16, 20]
4. Jesus affirmed that those who seek to obey are disciples (Kingdom citizens) [20].

The key issue to being Jesus' disciple is will you surrender and obey in every area of life. In essence, will you make Jesus king over your worldview, character, ethics, motives, ego, sexuality, marriage, family, career, calling, community?

2. Worship Jesus [17] “When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some doubted.”

The Greek term *proskanayo* means to revere, adore, worship or fall before in homage. The disciples worshipped, but it appears others at the Galilee were hesitant. Worship is more than songs of praise. Worship is a life of devotion to someone or something. Whatever is the master passion of your life is the object of your worship. And we become like what we worship [Ps. 115:8]. Our worship of Jesus helps reveal the glory of God. The Church exists to worship Christ. A person who reveres and adores Jesus knows that they have made Christ their king.

Some doubted, or literally hesitated. Doubt can keep us from experiencing the benefits of the king and kingdom. You might hesitate because you think the gospel is too good to be true like the two disciples on the road to Emmaus [Lu. 24:37-41]. Or you may be skeptical like Thomas [Jn. 20:24-29]. People likely hesitate not because of a lack of evidence to support the truth of the resurrection and the gospel, but like the religious leaders they don't want to yield to Jesus and live to please God rather than their own desires [Mt. 28:11-12].

How does the weekend gathering of a larger assembly, and mid-week small discipleship group relate to worship of Jesus? In Ac. 2:42-47 we discover the early church gathering as a large assembly and in smaller groups to grow as disciples through learning and living God's word. This pattern of a community of faith gathering together and scattering together is descriptive and prescriptive. Being a disciple of Jesus is a community rather than simply a personal experience.

3. Make disciples of Jesus [18-20] And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,²⁰ teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, *even* to the end of the age.” Amen.

Jesus makes clear that the basis for His commission or commandment is His Sovereign authority, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth” [18]. All of Jesus' followers are called to “go” or literally, “as you are going” and make disciples [19]. The role of pastors and teachers is to equip God's people to fulfill this commission and thus build the Body of Christ [Eph. 4:11-12]. Thus, all followers of Jesus are to make disciples. The process of making disciples should be happening in your home, your work, your school, and your neighborhood. The process begins prior to someone's conversion and does not end at their conversion. Jesus' followers are called to make disciples of all the nations [19]. The commission is to make disciples of all people groups. Jesus' earthly ministry was limited to Israel and focused primarily to Jews. His followers would bring the gospel to Gentiles and to people very different than themselves. The Book of Acts highlights the spread of the gospel from Jerusalem, to Judea, to Samaria, and the outermost parts of the world [Ac. 1:8]. Today, Christianity is the world's only truly global religion. It is the most culturally diverse religion, because it has the answers for all cultural meta-narratives. Pew research center observes that Christianity is the world's largest faith with over 2.2 billion. The spread of the faith and the making of disciples has been incredible, but the issue is, are *you* a disciple who is making disciples? And are you willing to make disciples of people who are different from you?

What is a disciple? The Greek term *mathetes* refers to an apprentice who adheres completely to the teachings of another. You cannot be a Christian without Jesus being the master passion of your life and without seeking to conform your life to his example and teaching, “teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you” [20]. Jesus' disciples publicly identify with Him. Disciples are baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit [20]. Baptisms took place in a public place and were witnessed by other disciples. Baptism is a symbol of our identification with Christ in His death and resurrection [Rom. 6]. When you go under the water you identify with Jesus' death and burial and symbolically put to death the life dominated by the flesh. When you come up out of the water, you identify with Jesus' resurrection and the life empowered by the Spirit. That is why all three persons of The Trinity are referenced in baptism. Baptism is something that all disciples should do in obedience to Christ, but the ritual doesn't save you. We are saved by faith in Christ. The key idea in baptism is a public identification with Jesus. When you publicly identify with Jesus, your family, friends, co-workers, fellow students, and neighbors know that you're a follower of Jesus. A disciple of Jesus chooses to deny Himself to follow Jesus, “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me” [Mt. 16:24].

How can you make disciples? A disciple is actively involved in making other disciples of Jesus. Jesus' disciples learn of Him and from Him [Matt. 11:28-30]. We study the Scriptures, because they are uniquely inspired by God and are profitable to learn doctrine, correction, reproof, and instruct us how to be right with God, be mature, and be prepared for what God has called us to be and do [2Tim. 3:16]. Disciples wrestle with seeking to apply what they learn to real life. Disciples create authentic relational experiences to grow and help others to grow. They share what they are learning with others [2Tim. 2:2]. They seek to follow a healthy role model and be one for others. They create a space for difficult questions to be asked and answered. For example, how much can I drink before it is sin? How much nudity can someone see before it is wrong? What if I don't want to go to church? I'm struggling with depression, and I don't feel His joy is there something wrong? What about marijuana? How much should I give to God and why? I don't understand this part of the Bible, what does it mean? How can I deal with my spouse who has no interest in God? As an aside, our pastoral staff is here to support you in helping to discern answers.

You make disciples in your home with your children and spouse [Dt. 6:4-9]. There are family devotionals available (I've written two that are available for free). Talk about what you learned at church, and your Bible learning. Pray together. You also make disciples in your church, and in other people's apartments, and coffee houses. You engage and build meaningful relationships with people who know and don't yet know Christ. Getting involved in a Neighborhood Group and leading a group are great ways to become disciples who make disciples. Similarly, getting involved in an area of service in a local church or para-church is helpful.

Why be a disciple?

The Great Commission along with the Great Commandments are the essence of what it means to be Jesus' disciple. You'll experience purpose, meaning, and fulfillment in this life, and immeasurable blessings in the life to come. But best of all, you'll experience Jesus' presence and promise, "and lo, I am with you always, *even* to the end of the age." Amen. [20].

Study Guide Qs

Q1. We live in a culture that resists authority, where people want to do whatever they believe is right. How does that dynamic impact a person's desire and willingness to submit to Jesus? How can Jesus' disciples make disciples in the midst of that culture?

Q2 How has the weekend gathering of a larger assembly, and mid-week small discipleship group impacted your worship of Jesus?

Q3 What has helped you to grow as a disciple of Christ, and how would you like to grow in this season?

Q4 How do you plan to make disciples in this season?

"Digging Deeper" (optional or alternative study)

1. Research the topic, “first century disciples” and consider how a Jewish audience at the time of Jesus would likely have understood his words. What did you find particularly interesting? How does what you learned impact your understanding of what it means to be a disciple?

2. Compare and contrast a 1st Century biblical understanding of being Jesus’ disciple with a 21st Century consumer approach to the Christian faith.

Love your neighbor *outside* the group better:

1. Who would like to share how they sought to befriend or build relationship with their neighbors where they live, work, study, or play this past week?
2. Are there some needs that can provide us an opportunity to love our neighbor outside the group?
3. Here is a neighboring idea(s) for us to consider for the week(s) ahead:

Plan to engage neighbors who are trick or treating on Halloween. Consider going beyond sharing candy. Perhaps set-up a table in front of your residence with hot cocoa and marshmallows, or BBQ hot dogs and offer bottled water. You can order gospel tracts to offer with candy: https://www.google.com/search?q=halloween+gospel+tracts&rlz=1C5CHFA_enUS737US737&oq=halloween+gospel&aqs=chrome.0.0j69i57

Love your neighbor *inside* the group better:

1. Are there some needs in our group that can provide us an opportunity to love our neighbor within the group?
2. What might we do about that need to help?

Prayer [Loving God and Neighbors better]:

Close the NG meeting with a time of group prayer. Encourage each participant to pray, but don’t force anyone to pray. Encourage the group to keep their prayers brief so that each person can pray.

Leader Notes:

- 1. Seek to involve as many group participants as possible.** A good group discussion time allows people to get to know the passage and one another better.
- 2. Feel free to pre-select the discussion questions that you want to focus on** in case there isn’t enough time to answer them all.

3. The “Digging Deeper” section provides some optional or alternative study and discussion activities. As a group leader, you can choose to focus on the “Digging Deeper” section, include part of that section in your group meeting, or not use it at all. Try to give the group sufficient notice so they can be prepared for the meeting.

4. Every time you meet consider asking:

a. What about this passage is particularly exciting, challenging, or confusing? If a leader is uncertain about a question of doctrine or theology don't hesitate to follow-up with your coach during the week. Then revisit the issue(s) when the group gathers next time.