



## SESSION 1 - FIRST MEETING

I hope to make the next number of weeks with you not just another program that you can check off your punch-list of things you did while going to church. Instead, I want to invite you into a deeper level of relationship with some people than you have previously held with them. Incidentally, two of those happen to be the Lord Jesus Christ and His Holy Spirit. Relationships begin when two parties choose to have an impact with the other. Since the ones we hope to develop are built around the common denominator of our love for Jesus Christ, we're going to be relying upon His words as interpreted by His Holy Spirit throughout our time together. That alone is sufficient reason to go to the Lord in prayer even now as we begin this series of evenings together.

((OPEN IN PRAY))

I am relatively new to Heritage, so for somewhat selfish reasons I am going to open by asking that you share a little bit about yourselves with all of us.

Tell us: Name, Your time at Heritage, How do you serve the Lord here, Were you ever personally discipled? (If 'yes', when and if 'no', what if any impact has that had on your ability to disciple others up until now?)

Do you recall a scriptural verse or verses that have had an impact on your life that you can directly point to the verse(s) as being especially and personal valuable?

((WAIT))

I have a series in Mark that tells a story which became very personally meaningful to me and my wife. The address is Mark 8: 22-25. These led us into knowing in our hearts that our marriage for these last 23 years was truly God's gracious gift to each of us.

Let me share another verse that I hope will become equally meaningful to you. If you turn to Revelation 22 you will recognize that the author John is describing a future event regarding the origin of the River of Life that accompanies the arrival of the New Jerusalem. Who will read the first three verses?

(READ) Now who will read verse four?

Whose face will we see? Folks, even Moses was told to turn his head so that he would be protected from seeing the fullness of the glory of God. Imagine: A time will come when we will see the Lord God face-to-face. And we will know for certain that, unlike those who had been stamped with the number 666 as recognition that they belonged to Satan, we will have the Lord's name on our foreheads. It is undeniable that we will be eternally identified to all as God's own chosen people. Wow!

That is motive enough for me to do whatever I am asked to do now so that future reward will be mine, and I trust it is enough for you. But whose requests are these that make the

difference? The issue here, and specific to this series you are joining with me for these weeks, is not about what Pastor Wes is asking of you. It is certainly not me asking you for I am simply a co-laborer alongside you. No what matters is what Jesus has asked us to do. Following what He asked is the only thing that matters. Knowing what and why we do what we do has to be based on this one single truth. It is Jesus that we are attempting to honor though the things will be doing here and going forward.

As the local representative for Navigator Church Ministries, I will do my best to never ask anything of you or make opinionated statements that do not have a scriptural basis. That said, there is a progression of four scriptures that I want us to look at early because they will be fundamental to what we are to do, why, when, and where we are to do it, and who we are do it with.

((PICK FOUR READERS FOR THESE SCRIPTURES))

John 14: 21 (what)

Matthew 22: 37-40 (what, why)

Matthew 28: 18-20 (what, where, when)

2 Timothy 2:2 (with whom)

Welcome: I will briefly introduce myself and describe my role in this study.  
I will ask who is the real 'teacher' in this group - The Holy Spirit.  
Request each participant to state his/her name and role in church  
(No need to tell extended story because we will share those later.)

Prayer: (Before praying have someone voice 'why' we open in prayer.)  
Ask someone to open us in prayer.

Discussion: Some of you are mature Christians. So what do you think you could possibly gain by going through 10+ weeks gathered together?

(I will take you through this material as though it is new to you since at some point I will depend on you do exactly as I will be doing, and at the exactly same pace. There is a reason as you will soon discover.)

What are you hoping to learn or gain by being a part of this group?

Shortly, we will begin engaging in the study of a workbook by Bill Mowry, entitled "The Ways of the Alongsider". The purpose of this book and study is to help people see a clear pathway in engaging in the commission of Jesus to "make disciples" and lower any perceived obstacles to that engagement. Between now and then we are going to have some pre-discussions to that material.

(Reiterate - Please don't shut me out or assume this info is too elementary because to the person you next disciple it may be brand new.)

(Pass out the two-page hand-outs for Sessions 1 - 15 and the Multiplier Sheet)

(Distribute the 'Quiet Times' Assignment pages at the end of this session.)

Today's focus is two-fold:

The first part is a review of The Great Commission, while the second part will be focused on the topic of 'quiet times' (aka 'qt's').

## THE GREAT COMMISSION

Ask someone to read Matthew 28:18-20 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." (NIV)

First off,

- What do you believe the GC is? ( an invitation, a request, or a command,)
- What is Christ actually commissioning us to do?
- Consider these questions as we review the GC:
  - o Who is being commissioned?
  - o What is their potential impact?
  - o Why we should we be a part of this endeavor?
  - o When is our job completed?

We define the word disciple as a follower of someone else's teachings. In our case going forward that someone else is always going to be Jesus. Therefore, any one of us who believes in the validity of the teachings of Jesus will considered as being a disciple. Granted we weren't present 2,000 years ago when this message was first delivered, but I ask, 'Does this message apply to you?'

This 'Great Commission' was the very last utterance to His disciples. It is the commission that defines Jesus' "Plan A" for reaching the world for all generations to come, and there is no "Plan B". It enlists every believer into this endeavor and provides the broad outline of how we are to proceed. To understand this commission we must look at each of its components - 2 bookends; 1 command; and 3 clarifying participles.

2 Bookends: Statements about the power and position of Christ.

Jesus declares that all authority has been given to Him and with that authority comes the power to complete what He sets out to do. Having the authority also gives Him the right to delegate to us whatever He deems fit. Therefore, we engage in this commission not according to our own power but in the power of the One who charged us with this task - all the promises that Christ has given are ours to claim and stand on.

Jesus ends the commission with the reminder that He will be with us and for us in each step we take along this path. When we do well - He is there. When we mess up - He is there. When we need help - He is there. When we have no idea of what to do - He is there.

1 Command: Only one true verb and therefore one true command - "Make Disciples".

At first glance there appears to be four verbs but three are actually participles which add to the clarification of the verb. The verb or action is for us to "make"; we are to 'make disciples'.

There is the first problem we encounter. Who among us can change the heart of a person? Certainly I cannot, and I dare say you would agree that neither can you. Only Christ can do this.

To better understand what He is really telling us to do we must look at one of Christ's first statements to His future disciples - Matthew 4:19 "Come follow me", Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of men". He will be the one who changes the heart but we are to help believers learn to "follow Him". We are being enlisted as co-laborers with Christ Himself in the greatest work we could be given; building the kingdom of God one person at a time. Our job is to advance the kingdom by first simply introducing people to Jesus and then advance the discussion regarding Him.

Making disciples is our work, our ministry; no matter what other task we may have been given. We may be given the task of being on praise team (because of our gifts, passions, experience and where God has designed us to be) but our ministry is to make disciples. We may have been given the task of being an Associate Pastor (because this is where God has placed us) but our ministry is to make disciples. We can do this because He is always there with us.

The same holds true outside of the church. We may be a firefighter, a plant worker, a salesperson, or hold any other role, but our individual ministry is to make disciples.

3 Participles: Going, Baptizing, Teaching to obey.

When I took New Testament Greek, better scholars than me described the word 'Go' to be more appropriately translated as a participle. That would mean we can look at 'go' as being "as you are going". In other words, wherever you find yourself in life - where you live, work, and play - you can and should be about the business of making disciples. You cannot divide your life into the spiritual and secular; it is a total life, one completely under the Lordship of Christ Jesus.

The next participle is 'baptizing'. This word helps us see that we cannot disciple an unbeliever. So, our first task is to share the gospel and then help them take their first step of obedience - baptism. The gospel is received through evangelism; then it is lived out through discipleship. We must engage in both for there to be life.

Next is 'teaching'. We are to teach them to obey everything Jesus commanded you and me. We have been challenged to trust, love and obey what God is saying. We're to gain head knowledge of His truths, that is to understand first what they mean. Then, we're to absorb those truths; we're to apply them to our hearts as we see how they apply to their current situations. It is only in the heart that we can commit our lives to these truths by taking steps of obedience.

Would someone turn in your Bible and read Isaiah 43:4? (WAIT) There is a promise here I want you to see. Isaiah 43:4 (Since you are precious and honored in my sight, and because I love you, I will give men in exchange for you, and people in exchange for your life.)

I want to stop here for a moment. What does this mean to you?

(It tells us that God will give us people to come alongside of, but there is a cost - we must give Christ our life to use in the lives of others.

So, why on earth would I want to pay this kind of a price? If you like to see text is relationship to numbers, consider these seven reasons as related to all men and women who call themselves His disciple; you can personalize them:

1. Because Jesus has commanded that I do this.
2. Because I want to hear Christ say "Well done good and faithful servant".
3. Because I have been chosen to co-labor with God's Holy Spirit.
4. Because I can be an instrument of Christ in the lives of others.
5. Because it gives me the great joy described in 3rd John verses 3-4.
6. Because it is something of eternal value that I can give my life to.
7. Because Christ has trusted me to do this. And here is one more.
8. Because within it my life can have tremendous impact on the world.
  - a. Look at the multiplication vs. addition chart.

Remember our job of "making disciples" is not complete when another becomes a disciple. Rather, it is complete only when that disciple in turn produces a disciple who goes and does likewise by reproducing disciples. 2nd Timothy 2:2

In our hearts we see abortion as a tragedy for a number of reasons. One is simply the fact that a family's generation cannot continue beyond its present number without the conception of offspring. Adam and Eve were charged with being fruitful, and so has every other generation. The same is no different insofar as making disciples. The truth of Jesus Christ will not go forward without His disciples doing what we have been charged with doing. Amen.

Are there any questions or comments concerning the "Great Commission"?

As we wrap up this segment, I want to next turn our discussion to the second focus today. It is on 'quiet times'. Please know, I have no doubt that every one of you understands the general components of quiet times. Again, this may seem elementary for you, but you cannot assume they are elementary to someone else.

So, let's review some basics. This is going to be two way: I ask; you answer.

- How do you define 'quiet times'? (Are they part of the 'preparation' times you use to prepare a message or planning out your service roll at work?)
- Who is our model for having qt's? (Jesus, others - how about you?)
- Is there a specific time mandated to have qt's?
  - o Ask someone to turn to Mark 1:35 and read it to us
  - o Is this a command? (No, it is an example)
- What do you believe are some of these values; why do you believe they're important?

How could these personally apply to you? ((Ask God))

- How would you describe the format of having qt's?
- Why do you believe qt's are considered as being two-way discussions?
  - o Talk
  - o Listen

Present statistics of the Barna Survey for Willow Creek and Focus on the Family  
5,000 Bible-believing Churches, 250,000 Evangelical Christians, 17% have qt's  
We have 1,440 minutes in a day. Yet the average of these 17% was 2 to 3 minutes

Do you have any basis to believe that the numbers are different here at Heritage? If you are not currently investing in having routine quiet times, I want to ask a favor of you. Sometime during the next 24 hours would you commit to asking God in prayer if you should start having them? I ask this because it is not about me, or anyone else, who encourages you to have quiet times. The only motive worth following is the one confirmed between you and God.

We will talk more about the issues related to qt's in future meetings. For now, as we close, are there any unanswered questions so far related to anything we have talked about today?  
(WAIT)

Please complete the "Quiet Time Study" for our next meeting. (Hand out sheets.) We'll review the responses to these questions next time. Thanks.

And now, will someone volunteer to close our time in prayer?