Joining Jesus on His Mission

A One Week Bible Study Guide

Primary Passages:

- Matthew 28:16–20
- John 5:17
- Mark 3:14
- John 4:34–38
- 1 Corinthians 3:5–7

Introduction

Following Jesus involves more than knowing what He taught. It means putting His teachings into practice and participating in the work He has called His followers to do. In Matthew 28, Jesus commands His disciples to go and make disciples of all nations. But He doesn't ask them to invent a mission of their own or accomplish it through their own strength. He invites them to participate in His mission, under His authority, with the promise of His presence.

Throughout this five-day study, we'll explore what the Great Commission means, why making disciples involves more than sharing information, how to recognize opportunities to share Jesus in everyday life, and why we can trust God with the results of our faithfulness.

Day One: The Mission Belongs to Jesus

Theme: Under His Authority

Scripture: Matthew 28:16–20; John 5:17

Key Thought

Before Jesus tells His disciples to go and make disciples, He establishes His authority. The Great Commission begins with what Jesus has been given, not with what His followers are capable of accomplishing.

Jesus also reminds us that God is already at work. Our responsibility isn't to create something for God to bless, but to recognize what He is doing and seek to participate in

it. God's work doesn't depend on our involvement to begin, yet He still calls us to take part.

Questions for Personal Reflection

1. Read Matthew 28:16–20. Why do you think Jesus begins by declaring His authority before giving His disciples their instructions?

2. What is the difference between asking God to bless our plans and asking Him to show us how to participate in His plans?

3. In John 5:17, Jesus says that His Father is always working. How might remembering this change the way you approach your responsibilities as a follower of Jesus?

4. Are there areas of your life where you have been more focused on what you want to accomplish than on recognizing what God may already be doing?

Reflection

Jesus doesn't ask us to establish His mission. He asks us to participate in it. This changes how we view our responsibility. We don't have to carry the burden of making everything happen, but neither are we free to ignore His instructions.

Consider whether your plans, priorities, and prayers reflect a desire to participate in God's work or an expectation that God will participate in yours.

Daily Prayer

Ask God to help you recognize where He is already working. Pray for a willingness to set aside your own expectations when they distract you from His purposes, and ask Him to show you how you can faithfully participate in His mission.

Day Two: Called to Make Disciples

Theme: Following and Teaching Others

Scripture: Matthew 28:19–20; Mark 3:14

Key Thought

Jesus didn't simply tell His followers to spread information about Him. He commanded them to make disciples, teaching others to obey everything He had commanded.

Making disciples includes sharing the gospel and helping people come to faith in Christ, but it doesn't end there. Those who begin following Jesus need to continue learning how to live according to His teachings.

In Mark 3:14, we see that Jesus appointed His disciples to be with Him and to be sent out. They were called to follow and instructed to go. The same principle applies to those who follow Him today.

Questions for Personal Reflection

1. According to Matthew 28:19–20, what does Jesus command His followers to do? How does His instruction go beyond simply teaching people information about Him?

2. Mark 3:14 describes two purposes for which Jesus appointed His disciples. How are spending time with Jesus and being sent out by Him connected?

3. Why is there a difference between knowing what Jesus taught and actually obeying His teachings? Can you identify an example of that difference in your own life?

4. The first disciples were still learning when Jesus sent them out. What concerns or feelings of being unqualified might keep you from helping someone else follow Jesus?

Reflection

Discipleship isn't about reaching a point where we know everything and no longer need to learn. The first disciples made mistakes, misunderstood Jesus, and needed correction. Yet Jesus continued teaching and preparing them, even as He sent them to participate in His work.

You don't need to have every answer before you can help someone else follow Jesus. But you do need to be willing to follow Him yourself.

Think about how what you're learning from Jesus is being reflected in your actions and your interactions with others.

Daily Prayer

Ask Jesus to help you become someone who not only learns His teachings but lives according to them. Pray for a willingness to continue learning, to receive correction when necessary, and to share what you've learned with others.

Day Three: Recognizing Everyday Opportunities

Theme: Open Your Eyes

Scripture: John 4:34–38

Key Thought

When Jesus spoke with the Samaritan woman at the well, His disciples were focused on getting food. Meanwhile, Jesus was having a conversation that would lead many people in the nearby town to believe in Him.

When the disciples returned, Jesus told them to open their eyes and look at the fields that were ready for harvest. He wasn't talking about crops. He was drawing their attention to people.

Sometimes we become so focused on our schedules, responsibilities, and problems that we overlook opportunities to share Jesus with the people around us.

Participating in His mission doesn't always require traveling somewhere far away or speaking before a crowd. Opportunities can exist in our everyday conversations and relationships.

Questions for Personal Reflection

1. Read John 4:34–38. What was Jesus trying to help His disciples understand when He told them to look at the fields?

2. How does the account of Jesus and the Samaritan woman demonstrate that God may already be working in situations we haven't recognized?

3. What responsibilities, distractions, or concerns tend to occupy your attention throughout the day? How might they sometimes cause you to overlook the people around you?

4. Think about your workplace, neighborhood, family, or daily activities. What opportunities might you have to demonstrate your faith, answer questions, offer prayer, or begin a conversation about Jesus?

Reflection

Not every conversation needs to become a discussion about faith. And not every person we encounter is looking for someone to give them a sermon.

But we should be paying attention.

Sometimes an opportunity begins with a simple question. Someone might ask why you have hope during difficult circumstances. A coworker might ask you to pray for them. Someone might notice something different about the way you live.

Other times, we may need to take the initiative rather than waiting for someone else to begin the conversation.

Consider whether you are paying attention to the people God has already placed around you. Being intentional about sharing your faith and being attentive to opportunities are both part of participating in Jesus' mission.

Daily Prayer

Ask God to help you become more attentive to the people around you. Pray for the willingness to recognize opportunities to share your faith, the wisdom to know when to speak, and the courage to begin a conversation about Jesus when the opportunity arises.

Day Four: Faithful With the Responsibility

Theme: God Produces the Growth

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 3:5–7

Key Thought

When the Apostle Paul wrote to the church in Corinth, he addressed divisions among believers who were identifying themselves with different teachers. Paul explained that he had planted the seed and Apollos had watered it, but God was the One who made it grow.

The same principle applies when we share the gospel and help others follow Jesus.

We can explain Scripture, answer questions, pray for people, encourage them, and demonstrate what it means to follow Christ. But we cannot force someone to believe or produce spiritual transformation through our own efforts.

Our responsibility is to be faithful. The results belong to God.

Questions for Personal Reflection

1. In 1 Corinthians 3:5–7, how does Paul describe the roles that he and Apollos played? What does he say about God's role?

2. How does the illustration of planting, watering, and growing help explain the difference between our responsibility and God's work?

3. Have you ever become discouraged because someone didn't respond to your efforts to share the gospel or encourage them in their faith? How might Paul's teaching change your perspective?

4. Although we cannot control another person's response, we can examine how we communicate and live. Are there areas where you could become more patient, more clear in sharing the gospel, or more consistent in your actions?

Reflection

Imagine planting seeds in a garden. You prepare the soil, plant the seeds, provide water, and make sure the plants receive sunlight. All of those things matter. But no amount of effort or determination can force a seed to grow.

Paul uses that same idea to describe spiritual growth.

Sometimes we may spend months or even years sharing, encouraging, and praying for someone without seeing the response we hoped for. That can be discouraging, especially when we begin to believe that their response depends entirely upon us.

But faithfulness and results are not the same thing.

This doesn't excuse us from participating. Paul planted, and Apollos watered. Both had responsibilities. Yet neither could accomplish what only God could do.

Think about whether you've been carrying responsibility for something that was never yours to control.

Daily Prayer

Ask God to help you remain faithful in sharing the gospel, encouraging others, and demonstrating His teachings through your life. Pray for the humility to recognize areas where you need to grow, and for the ability to trust Him with the results of your efforts.

Day Five: Faithful as We Go

Theme: Perspective and Response

Scripture: Matthew 28:16–20; John 15; Philippians 2

Key Thought

Jesus ends the Great Commission with a promise: He will be with His followers always, even to the end of the age.

He knows that those He calls are imperfect. He knows their weaknesses and limitations. Yet He still commissions them to participate in His mission.

Throughout the *Following Jesus* series, we've explored what it means to abide in Jesus, trust Him, know Him, become like Him, and love like Him. Now we are reminded that following Jesus also means joining Him in His work.

But understanding these things isn't enough. Information without application will not lead to transformation.

Our perspective matters, but so does our response.

Questions for Personal Reflection

1. Read Matthew 28:16–20 again. How does Jesus' promise to be with His followers relate to the responsibility He has given them?

2. In John 15, Jesus teaches that apart from Him we can do nothing. How does this connect with the need to depend on Him as we participate in His mission?

3. Philippians 2 reminds us that God is at work within His followers, shaping their desires and actions according to His purposes. Why is it important to remember this when we feel unprepared or inadequate?

4. Looking back over this week's study, what is one specific way you can respond to what you've learned about following Jesus and participating in His mission?

Reflection

When Jesus called His first disciples along the Sea of Galilee, they had a decision to make. They could continue doing what they had always done, or they could respond to His invitation to follow Him.

Following Jesus still requires a response.

We can study Scripture, learn about discipleship, and understand what the Great Commission means. But if that knowledge never influences how we live, how we treat people, or how we respond to the opportunities around us, we have missed something important.

Jesus has already established His mission. He has given His followers a responsibility, and He has promised to be with them.

We don't have to know everything. We don't have to accomplish everything. And we don't have to control the results.

But we do need to be willing to follow Him.

As you finish this study, consider two questions:

Has your perspective on participating in Jesus' mission changed?

And what will your response be?

Daily Prayer

Thank Jesus for His promise to be with those who follow Him. Ask Him to help you put what you've learned into practice, remain faithful in the responsibilities He's given you, and trust Him with what you cannot control. Pray for a willingness to respond when opportunities arise to help others know and follow Him.

Closing Thought

The purpose of studying God's Word is not simply to gain more information. It is to learn how to live according to what Jesus has taught.

Throughout this week, you've considered His authority, His command to make disciples, the opportunities that exist in everyday life, your responsibility to participate faithfully, and His promise to be with you.

The question now is the same one that brought the *Following Jesus* series to its conclusion:

What are you going to do with what you've learned?