

**Lesson Title:** Making Disciples of ALL

Key Concept: Our local church has a unique calling within the worldwide body of Christ. We are striving to fulfill our mandate of *ALL making disciples of ALL*. This is **what** we do. This lesson examines the second *ALL* and our radical understanding of *making disciples of ALL*.

**Scriptures:**

And then he told them, “Go into *all* the world and preach the Good News to *everyone*. (emphasis added)

(Mark 16:15 *New Living Translation*)

Therefore, go and make disciples of *all* the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. (emphasis added)

(Matthew 28:19 *New Living Translation*)

Context Scriptures: Matthew 28:18–20; Mark 16:15; Luke 9:23–27; 1 Corinthians 9:19–23

**Lesson Thoughts:**

Jesus is clear in the Great Commission: his disciples are to go, preach the gospel (good news), and make disciples, baptizing and teaching them. In both Mark and Matthew, the scope of this mandate is emphasized. Go into *all* the world and make disciples of *all* the nations. The gospel is for everyone. It is from this well-defined emphasis that we take our understanding of *our* unique calling.

Our local church began with the fundamental desire to be the place where those who are not wanted elsewhere are welcome. All are invited to become a disciple of Jesus. The gospel and the teachings of Jesus are for everyone. Children? All. Elderly? All. Different culture? All. Different skin tone? All. Disabled? All. Special needs? All. Different language? All. Different nation of origin? All. Single parent? All. Poor? All. Distrustful of religion? All. Physically abused? All.

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Spiritually abused? All. Sexually abused? All. Men hater? All. Women hater? All. Racist? All. Bigoted? All. Prejudiced? All. Felon? All. Sexually promiscuous? All. Unbelieving? All. Dishonest? All. Addicted? All. Socially awkward? All. You name the exception, and our answer is all.

The good news of the gospel and the teachings of Jesus are for all, and we are radically committed to creating and maintaining an environment where all are welcome. This local church is the place where all can come, be loved as they are, hear the good news, and begin their journey of transformation through the teachings of Jesus. No one is excluded; all are invited.

We are totally committed to reaching all in our local communities, but we are equally committed to all the nations of the world. The church is not American; the church is Christian. We are defined by our master Jesus, the good news about him, and his teachings. This is why we are a church that gives beyond our size for others to go around the world to all the nations. Every missionary is an extension of our all. If we ever stop giving and sending to the nations of the world, then we have abandoned the all.

Our diversity is not a goal. It is the product of our uncompromising devotion to Jesus' mandate to go into *all* the world and preach and teach *all* the nations. Because our answer to every exception is all, we are diverse. Diversity is hard. Cultures and opinions conflict and even clash. The different places in our understanding of the teachings of Jesus and in our journey of discipleship sometimes create tension. None of us are comfortable in diversity, even when we value it. And we never arrive. We are constantly making mistakes. But we refuse to abandon our radical commitment to all. We *will* make disciples of **ALL**.

So how do we make disciples of **ALL**? Disciples make disciples, and Jesus is very precise about how we ourselves become disciples: deny self, take up our cross daily, and follow him (Luke 9:23). Disciples who make disciples do so by modeling the life of a disciple. Paul reflects this in his corrective epistle to the Corinthian church. He states that though he is free (a Jew of the highest standard and a Roman citizen), he makes himself a slave to all (1 Corinthians 9:19). After listing the diverse groups of people for whom he denies himself (his preferences and culture), he states: "I have become all things to all people, so that by all means I may save some. I do all these things because of the gospel, so that I can be a participant in it" (1 Corinthians 9:22–23 *New English Translation*).

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Our radical commitment to all means our answer to every exception is all as we deny self in preference of all. This is what our Master did, and thus we his disciples follow his example.

**Discussion Questions:**

- 1) Who are your exceptions? Who do you struggle to believe the gospel is for?
- 2) Why are these persons an exception in your opinion?
- 3) What is the biblical answer to your exceptions?
- 4) What concrete actions can you take to change your opinion to match Jesus' mandate to *make disciples of ALL*?

Next Lesson: ALL Making Disciples

Notes and Reflections

- 1) Study the gospels and identify all the persons that were rejected by Jewish society and the religious leaders. Why were they rejected?
- 2) Now re-study these same persons. How did Jesus treat them?
- 3) Who are the persons that our society and the church typically reject?
- 4) How would Jesus treat these persons?

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Notes and Reflections, cont.