

**Lesson Title:** ALL Making Disciples

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 first *ALL* and our radical understanding of *ALL making disciples*.

**Scriptures:**

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And *you will be my witnesses*, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. (emphasis added)
(Acts 1:8 *New Living Translation*)

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. (emphasis added)
(Ephesians 4:11–12 *New Living Translation*)

Context Scriptures: Matthew 28:16–20; Mark 16:14–20; Acts 1:6–9; Luke 11:13; 2 Timothy 2:2; Ephesians 4:11–16

**Lesson Thoughts:**

Jesus instructs his disciples to go, preach the gospel (good news), and make disciples, baptizing and teaching them (Matthew 28; Mark 16). Then immediately before ascending into the clouds, he promises power from the Holy Spirit, which will make them his witnesses to tell people about him (Acts 1:8). An examination of the contexts of these scriptures reveals that these instructions were addressed specifically to the original disciples. So, who specifically is to make disciples? Is this some special calling for some group of select people? Clearly Jesus expects this witness to continue until he returns. But are the witnesses only the people

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who somehow operate in the apostolic succession from the original eleven?
Whom does Jesus expect to make disciples?

Jesus promises power with the infilling of the Holy Spirit that enables his disciples to be witnesses to others about him. So, the key to disciple making is the power of the Holy Spirit and the resulting witness. Jesus promises the Holy Spirit to those who ask him (Luke 11:13). Thus, the answer to the question is plain: Jesus expects those who are filled with his Holy Spirit (and by its power telling others about him) to make disciples. Jesus is willing to pour out his Holy Spirit upon all and therefore, he expects all disciples to make disciples. The fulfillment of Jesus' instruction in the Great Commission is **ALL** making disciples.

According to the Great Commission, there are four elements to disciple making: going, preaching the good news, baptizing, and teaching. Going is the disciple being available, whether going across the world or across town. Baptizing is the response of the new believer to the news. Both sharing the good news and teaching what Jesus taught are the fulfillment of what Paul describes in a letter to Timothy: "You have heard me teach things that have been confirmed by many reliable witnesses. Now teach these truths to other trustworthy people who will be able to pass them on to others" (2 Timothy 2:2). The disciple maker is always available to share the good news of Jesus and to pass on to others the teachings they themselves have received.

This disciple-making process is not reserved for a select few; rather, those who follow Jesus are called to contribute to his work. In fact, Paul describes to the Ephesian church that God has gifted apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers to the church. Their purpose is not to be the special ones who make disciples; instead, they are "to equip God's people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ." All will mature, all will speak the truth in love, all will grow more and more like Christ, and each part will do its own special work helping the other parts of the body to grow (Ephesians 4:11-16). All are involved in the disciple-making process.

As new disciples are made by passing on the truths of Jesus, one of these truths is that the Holy Spirit is available to all, and thus all are called to be witnesses by going, sharing the good news of Jesus, baptizing those who believe, and teaching them the truths of Jesus that have already been passed down. Each member of the body of Christ is different and thus shares uniquely in the disciple-making process. But all members of the church are called to contribute to making

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disciples. Jesus' vision for his body, the church, is a lifestyle in which ALL disciples are making disciples.

**Discussion Questions:**

- 1) What does it mean to *preach* the gospel (good news) of Jesus? What does it mean to *teach* others what Jesus taught?
- 2) Is there a biblical distinction between preaching and teaching? If so, what is it?
- 3) How does your thinking need to change for you to start preaching the gospel (good news) of Jesus?
- 4) How does your thinking need to change for you to start teaching others what you have been taught about Jesus?

Next Lesson: ALL Making Disciples of ALL through **Worship**

Notes and Reflections

- 1) Study the book of Acts and identify all the people who told others about Jesus. Write down their characteristics and a description of each of them. Are these people all the same? How are they different from each other?
- 2) From your study above, are there any people with whom you identify? Write them down.
- 3) If they could preach the gospel and teach about Jesus, why can't you? Write down the reasons.
- 4) Take the above reasons and begin to daily pray over them. Ask God to give you direction about actions to take to address these barriers. Ask him for wisdom to change how you are thinking about yourself.

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Notes and Reflections, cont.