The Great Commission Matthew 28:18–20

Hook

Main Point: Jesus commands His followers to participate in the Great Commission.

All businesses exist for a reason, to fulfill a want or a need for their customer base. Break up your Bible Fellowship group into teams and see if they can correctly match the airline with their mission statement.

Match the mission statement with the company:

A. American Airlines
B. United Airlines
C. Southwest Airlines
D. Delta Airlines

1) “We—XXXXXXXXX employees, customers, and community partners together form a force for positive local and global change, dedicated to bettering standards of living and the environment where we and our customers live and work.”

2) “XXXXXXXXXX is committed to providing every citizen of the world with the highest quality air travel to the widest selection of destination possible.”
3) “Our mission is to create an inclusive work environment, characterized by dignity and respect, that empowers every employee to serve the global marketplace and contribute to our success.”

4) “The mission of XXXXXXXXX is dedication to the highest quality of Customer Service delivered with a sense of warmth, friendliness, individual pride, and Company Spirit.”

Do these mission statements line up with how these corporations do business?

What is so vital about a mission statement? What does it tell us?

Answer Key: A=2, B=3, C=4, D=1
The Great Commission, Matthew 28:18–20

Book

Main Point: Jesus commands His followers to participate in the Great Commission.

As the Church, we have a mission statement. Matthew 28:18–20 states:

*All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.*

*Bible Fellowship at Prestonwood exists to REACH our community, our nation, and our world with the Gospel, LEARN to grow in authentic and visible faith, and LOVE those around us with a biblically based devotion to Jesus.*

Matthew 28:18–19 [Read]

Sub Point: Reach our community, our nation, and our world with the Gospel

The command of the Great Commission is to go and make disciples of all nations. The Gospel is for everyone regardless of gender, age or nationality. Throughout Church history, missionaries have been sent to share the Gospel with people who did not know of Jesus. While there is still a great need for missionaries, recently the nations have come to us. For us to share the Gospel with all nations, we need to go both across the seas and across the street. If all believers went next door, across the street, and in their circle, they could reach many for Christ. Consider reaching the neighbors who surround you, the families around you at your kid’s soccer game, the people sitting nearby when you go out to eat. Together we can make an impact in reaching many for Christ!

Verses 18–19 start out with the authority of who Jesus is. Jesus commands obedience not as a nagging friend, nor an overbearing boss. Rather, Jesus commands obedience to the Great Commission because of the authority that He has. We see this earlier in the book of Matthew when Jesus states that “All things have been handed over to me by my Father” (11:27). To obey Jesus is to obey God.
The authority that Jesus has is directly tied to His mandate which is “go.” This is a word of action. We can’t go if we’re sitting still and doing nothing. The biggest barrier in sharing our faith with others is not a lack of people who need to hear about Jesus. Today:

- More than 7 billion people comprise the world population
- About 68 percent of the world identifies as non-Christian
- There are 3.4 billion people who have not heard the name of Jesus or have very limited access to the Gospel

Rather, the biggest barrier in the Great Commission’s being fulfilled is our lack of obedience. Fully dedicating ourselves to what Scripture proclaims doesn’t create a list of tasks we should and shouldn’t do each day. Instead, it transforms who we are; it changes our lifestyle as well as what we proclaim.

A common saying among Christians is “a great sermon isn’t preached; it’s lived.” Our lifestyle, whether honoring to the Lord or honoring to ourselves, reflects what we value the most. Some people are only known as a Christian because they have a decal on the back of their car shaped like a fish. These people’s lives don’t reflect a personal relationship with God (Titus 1:16). Our lives should reflect the character and nature of God. People should know the qualities of God because we are reflecting them in our lives.

On the other hand, the saying “a great sermon isn’t preached; it’s lived” leaves one thing out, and that is the proclamation of God’s Word. Even if we, as Christians, live a life that reflects Jesus, people around us still do not see the need to confess their sins before the God they have offended (Romans 10:14). As Christians, we must be ministers of reconciliation between the lost world and God. We must speak to people about Jesus and their need for His forgiveness.

Discussion Question: Why is it so hard for people to “go” share the Gospel with people?

Discussion Question: How can we hold each other accountable to having Gospel-centered conversations with those next door, across the street, and in our circle?

Matthew 28:20 [Read]
Subpoint: Learn to grow in authentic and visible faith

In verse 20, Jesus instructs us that after we reach people for Christ, we are to teach them to observe all that He has commanded. This involves learning the teachings of what God’s Word
says. 1 John 2:6 states that “whoever says he abides in him (Jesus) ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.” This only happens by studying God’s Word to see how Jesus lived.

The same breath that spoke the world into existence and breathed life into dust to create human beings, breathed the Scriptures into existence through those humans originally made of dust. The Holy Spirit inspired Scripture without error (2 Corinthians 2:12–13). The Bible is completely sufficient for training individuals and communities to live a righteous life and how to receive eternal life. Not all revelations of God are included within the Scripture but those needed for salvation are. Everything Jesus did was a revelation, but those that are included within the Bible are for the purpose of salvation. The Bible is also authoritative. Its authority is derived from the author, God. To reject the authority of Scripture is to reject the very One who speaks in Scripture, Christ.

Discussion Question: What are some qualities of Jesus that Christians should reflect?

Discussion Question: What are some ways we can encourage new believers in their walk with the Lord to learn to live as Christ lived?

Discipleship is a process where a more mature believer and a newer believer meet and talk about what God is doing in their lives, as well as teaching and instructing to grow in godliness. Through discipleship, believers are formed more and more into the image of Christ and the new creation He calls us to be. Have you ever wondered why Christians don’t look more like Christ? Often, it’s because they are not being discipled. The spiritual formation writer Dallas Willard once wrote that the word disciple is better translated as apprentice. An apprentice works under and alongside the master, learning what the master knows and doing what the master does. This idea of discipleship or apprenticeship is living a life not only for Jesus but with Jesus. Prestonwood has a curriculum called Starting Point that helps individuals understand the basics of being a Christian and how to grow in their Christian walk. See your group’s minister for more information.

The Gospel is never content to remain on a theoretical level. The Gospel always affects life. When individuals interact with the Word of God, there is no room for passivity. One must either accept or reject it. Likewise, in the lives of believers and specifically the Church, a true Gospel-centered church should fundamentally change the culture. Ray Ortlund, Jr., a pastor in Nashville, similarly states, “Gospel doctrine creates a gospel culture…. Without the doctrine, the culture will be weak. Without the culture, the doctrine will seem pointless.” A believer’s reading of Scripture grounds his or her life and daily practices.
If the Gospel were only words, a drawing, or formula, then not sharing it with others would be considered adequate. However, the Gospel is something much more than all of those things. The Gospel is a reality that people need to hear about. Furthermore, the Greek word for Gospel, *euaggelion*, means “good news.” The Gospel is the *good news* of what Christ has done, to save us from our sin. Like all other news, it must be proclaimed and broadcasted. The Gospel is not only spoken and announced through the words of believers, but also in the actions of believers. Through the lives of believers, the world sees a different way of living. One that is marked by humility, life-change and love.

**Sub Point: Love with a biblically based devotion to Jesus**

When a believer obeys the teaching of Christ in all of Scripture, the natural result is love. Matthew 22:37–39 states, “And he said to him, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’” Just like going next door, across the street and in your circle to reach people for Christ, we also should go in those same directions and love people in Christ.

**Discussion Question: What are some practical ways that you can show love to those around you?**

**Discussion Question: What are some things that make it difficult to love other people?**

While loving people can be difficult because it takes time, can be messy, and can be hard to know what to say, we still have a command to do it. 1 John 4:20 states, “*He who does not love his brother who he has seen cannot love God who he has not seen.*” The manner in which we love others reveals how we love God. Like the love of Christ, the love of believers comes with sacrifice. As John 15:13 states, “*Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.*” This unconditional love is not for the gain of one’s self or the approval of others. The type of love believers are called to give to others is one that seeks for others to be considered more important than themselves.

Loving one another not only involves meeting a need of the other person but also sharing the Gospel with them. One way our church meets both of these needs is through *Light the Night*. *Light the Night* is an opportunity to reach and love your neighbors by hosting a “fall party outside your house the week leading to October 31. Your neighbor kids not only get to play fun games and get candy, but they also learn that someone in their neighborhood cares about
them. As a host, you can also meet the parents of these kids and learn how to REACH and LOVE their family.

**Teacher: Show Light the Night DVD**

Reaching people and loving them can happen in our neighborhoods as well as across the world. Another great opportunity to make an impact is by filling up a shoebox with small gifts for our annual Operation Christmas Child collection in November. Since 1993, more than 157 million shoeboxes have been packed, shipped, and delivered into the hands of children in 160+ different countries. Every shoebox that is delivered contains personal-care items, toys, school supplies, and most importantly, a Gospel tract. This not only meets a need of someone in a practical way, but shares the life-changing message of the Gospel.

**Teacher: Show Operation Christmas Child DVD**

The life of a believer is one that is marked by love. However, this love does not come from a momentary feeling or of one's own will power. As 1 John 4:19 says, “We love because he first loved us.” The love that flows from the life of a believer flows from the sacrificial and overflowing love of Christ. Although this kind of love is not easy, we, as believers, have the Holy Spirit dwelling inside of us, empowering us to love others well.
The Great Commission Matthew 28:18–20

Took

As a society, it seems we are very interested in people’s dying words. Some last words are funny; some reveal the pain and struggle that someone may have endured throughout life. Jesus, of course, is not dead, but we have the last words He gave us before His Ascension, and those words are the Great Commission. As we consider the mission that we, as the Church, have been given, we must be prompted to action. As individuals, consider the challenges below. Discover ways that members can hold each other accountable as a Bible Fellowship group.

Challenges:

Reach: Go next door, across the street, and in your circle and share the Gospel with people around you. Use the Reach Card to hold yourself and each other accountable for sharing the Gospel with whom the Lord has laid on your heart. Take advantage of Light the Night as an opportunity to REACH your neighbors.

Learn: Identify ways in your own life that you can personally grow. Find other believers who might be able to disciple you. Find believers you might be able to disciple. If you need help with either of these, contact your group’s minister and he can set you up with someone.

Love: Be sensitive to the needs and wants of those around you. Find ways to practically meet those needs in your own community. Take advantage of Operation Christmas Child and use shoeboxes to share love those around the world.

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i https://joshuaproject.net
ii https://www.learnreligions.com/christianity-statistics-700533
iii On Mission, Special Issue, 2009, p.8