



# The Scrolls

Helping **CENTRAL BIBLE CHURCH** Families Belong, Become and Go Beyond V25 N36 September 3, 2023

## MAKING GOD KNOWN

“Missional Discipleship”

Matthew 28:18-20

### THIS WEEK'S CORE COMPETENCY

#### Disciple-Making

I multiply godly beliefs, virtues, and practices in others to encourage their spiritual growth in Christ.

*“And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others.”*

2 Timothy 2:2



What is the mission of Christians?

Romans 8:29 reads: “For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.” God intends that all of his children be “conformed to the image of his Son.” In this context conformity *certainly* alludes to *resurrection* conformity – i.e., receiving an immortal body like Jesus’ resurrection body. But in light of Romans 12:2, it *likely* refers to *moral* conformity as well – i.e., becoming obedient like Jesus to the will of God. One commentator writes: “*Symmorphous*, ‘conformed,’ probably does not have in view the conforming of the believer to the image of Christ that takes place internally and during the process of sanctification, or at least that is not the sole subject here. If it is referred to at all, it is referred to as part of the process that leads to the final act of conforming believers to Christ – namely the resurrection . . . Christ is the first of a new race, the race of the resurrected ones, *who for now are being conformed internally but not yet externally to Christ’s image*” (Ben Witherington III, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans*, 230, italics added). At first, the author denies that conformity refers to *sanctification* – the process believers go through to become like Jesus – but then, at last, he concedes that it does. This process is also referred to as discipleship and spiritual formation. Justification occurs *at once*, at a point in time; sanctification is a *process* – growing in *justification* is an oxymoron; growing in *sanctification* is not.

Some commentators point out that Jesus commissioned his disciples to “make *disciples*,” not to “make *converts*.” In their view, if God’s intention is to see his children conformed to the image of his Son, his *sanctification* intention for them is that they become followers of Jesus, that is, *disciples* and not merely *converts*. They infer that the gospel invitation to believe in Jesus *entails* the invitation to follow Jesus. The two are *inextricably* linked, so that a person has to be prepared and willing to follow Jesus – often stated in terms of “make him Lord” – at the moment that person believes, because “easy believism” doesn’t result in salvation. That’s not a “deal” Jesus is prepared to make. One author writes: “There is absolutely nothing in what Jesus himself or his early followers taught that suggests you can decide just to enjoy forgiveness at Jesus’s expense and have nothing more to

do with him. Some years ago A. W. Tozer expressed his ‘feeling that a notable heresy has come into being throughout evangelical Christian circles – the widely accepted concept that we humans can choose to accept Christ only because we need him as Savior and that we have the right to postpone our obedience to him as Lord as long as we want to!’ He then goes on to state ‘that salvation apart from obedience is unknown in the sacred scriptures’” (Dallas Willard, *The Great Omission*, 13-14).

The objection is overstated. *On the one hand*, belief in salvation by grace alone, apart from either obedience to the law or an advance commitment to obey Jesus, doesn’t mean that either *disobedience* or *no obedience* is acceptable. It simply doesn’t condition salvation upon either. Otherwise, “grace is no longer grace” (Ro 11:6). To those who objected to Paul’s gospel of grace, thinking it promotes sin – disobedience or no obedience – he writes: “Shall we sin because we are not under the law but under grace? By no means!” (Ro 6:15; cf. v. 1). *On the other hand*, belief in salvation by grace alone, apart from either obedience to the law or an advance commitment to obey Jesus, doesn’t mean that discipleship is inconsequential. Willard is perhaps still right to refer to it as the “Great Omission.” He writes: “The governing assumption today, among professing Christians, is that we can be ‘Christians’ forever and never become disciples. Not even in heaven, it seems, for who would need it there? That is the accepted teaching now. Check it out wherever you are. And this (with its various consequences) is the Great Omission from the ‘Great Commission’ in which the Great Disparity [i.e., the disparity between the *hope for life expressed in Jesus* and the *actual day-to-day behavior, inner life and social presence* of most of those who now profess adherence to him] is firmly rooted. As long as the Great Omission is permitted or sustained, the Great Disparity will flourish – in individual lives as well as in Christian groups and movements” (Willard, xi-xii).

The solution to the problem Willard poses is not to condition salvation on obedience to Jesus, but to obey the “Great Commission” and to teach those who believe in Jesus to follow all of the instructions the Master left for his disciples.

# 1

## EXAMINE GOD'S WORD

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### Read Matthew 28:18-20

18 Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 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, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

### Read in another translation

18 And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 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, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." (ESV)

After reading the text, practice your Observation skills by noting the following:

- Box "Then" indicating *temporal connection* in v. 18.
- Circle "All authority" in v. 18.
- Bracket "in heaven and on earth" in v. 18.
- Bracket "has been given" in v. 18.
- Box "Therefore" indicating *result* in v. 19.
- Underline "go" and "baptizing" in v. 19 and "teaching" in v. 20.
- Bracket "in the name of" in v. 19.
- Circle "obey" in v. 20.

What one word would you use to describe the **TONE** of this passage? (i.e., stern, joyful, cautious, etc.)

What word or idea stands out to you in this passage?

What one thing do you not understand in this passage?

Try to summarize the **THEME** of this passage in one word. If you were going to describe these verses, you might say, "This text is about \_\_\_\_\_."



## DIG DEEPER

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Answer the questions to help you apply the passage and prepare for discussion

1. *Where* were the disciples when Jesus came to them and *why* were they there?
  2. *Why* does “authority” matter, and *how much* “authority” does Jesus have?
  3. Jesus’ authority “has been given” to him. By whom?
  4. Verse 19 begins with “therefore.” Explain the relationship of verses 19-20 to verse 18.
  5. Explain the relationship of “baptizing” and “teaching” to Jesus’ command.
  6. “Name” is *singular* but “of the *Father* and of the *Son* and of the *Spirit*,” three persons, is *plural*. What do you make of that?
  7. Jesus *taught* more than he *commanded*. Translate verse 20, “teaching them to *obey* everything I have *commanded* you,” to reflect that.
  8. Identify a few things you are currently doing in obedience to Jesus’ command.
  9. What would you say is the mark of a *true* disciple?
  10. **Discussion:** Talk about whether all *true* Christians are *true* disciples.
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### Commentary On The Text

Last words are *lasting* words, especially when they contain a *command* accompanied by a *promise*. While Jesus' words to his disciples recorded in Matthew 28:16-20 may not have been his *very* last words to them, they have unquestionably had a lasting impact on the church. On their importance one author writes: "As Johnson puts it, 'No part of the Bible, with the possible exception of the letter to the Romans, has done more to give Christians the vision of a world-wide church. It has sent them to all nations, bearing the message of salvation through Christ, with which are linked the responsibility and privilege of obeying his words.' We must bear in mind that the picture of Jesus as a Jewish rabbi, with a little group of disciples around him, traveling in leisurely fashion in rural Galilee contrasts sharply with the missionary-minded church that we find in the early chapters of Acts. From the beginning the church exercised a missionary function and sought to make disciples out of those who listened to its proclamation. Why this sudden and dramatic change? Surely it is the fact of the resurrection of Jesus, coupled with the charge the risen Lord gave to his followers to make disciples of all nations" (Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, 744).

*The command*—"make disciples." According to Matthew 28:19, Jesus commissioned us "to make disciples." That's our mission, "make disciples," and by implication "become disciples" ourselves. "The term 'disciples' was the most popular name for the early believers. Being a disciple meant more than being a convert or a church member. *Apprentice* might be an equivalent term. A disciple attached himself to a teacher, identified with him, learned from him, and lived with him. He learned, not simply by listening, but also by doing. Our Lord called twelve disciples and taught them so that they might be able to teach others (Mark 3:13ff.)" (Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, 1:107).

*The commanded*—"more than the Eleven." It seems that more than the eleven were present on the occasion of this resurrection appearance. Jesus told the women that he appeared to on their way back from the empty tomb, "Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me" (v. 10). His unexpected use of "my brothers" instead of "my disciples" has led some to believe that Jesus appeared to more than the eleven in Galilee. If that was the case, it would explain Matthew's confusing statement in verse 17, "When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted." If only the eleven were present, it's difficult to understand the sense in which any or all of them "doubted." If more than the eleven were present, Matthew's words make better sense, "When they [the eleven] saw him, they [the eleven] worshiped him; but some [other "brothers" who had not yet seen the risen Lord] doubted or hesitated. In any case, Jesus commissioned more than the eleven to "make disciples." So we

can't shirk our responsibility, claiming that Jesus' command was given to the eleven only. On the other hand, it would be wrong for us to think that Jesus' command was given to us alone, to accomplish all on our own, as individuals. Think of it this way: making disciples is the mission of the church. Every member of the body is to be vitally involved in mission accomplishment, but it's a mission we accomplish together as each one does his or her part.

What's more, each one can not only play his or her part, each one can take part in the part played by others. For example, you may not be able to translate the Bible into one of the 2,100 languages spoken by 340,000,000+ people without a Bible in "the language of their heart;" most people aren't, but you can support a Wycliffe Bible translator who is. To which you might reply, "But *supporting* a Bible translator isn't the same as *being* a Bible translator." Maybe not exactly, but look at it this way. You have a daughter away at college. She calls to tell you that her car broke down, and it needs repair, so you send her to a mechanic who fixes her car, and you pay for the repairs. When she tells her friends what happened, she might say "A mechanic repaired my car;" she might also say, "My dad repaired my car." Either would be true, but she would probably say you did it even though you were miles away and probably couldn't have fixed it had you been there.

*The method*—"baptizing and teaching." The command, "make disciples," is accompanied by three participles, "going," "baptizing," and "teaching." One commentator explains: "The imperative explains the central thrust of the commission while the participles describe aspects of the process" (Michael J. Wilkins, *The NIV Application Commentary: Matthew*, 951). Most English versions translate the first participle, "going," as an imperative, "go," rather than "as you go" or "when you go" because as the same commentator goes on to explain: "These subordinate participles take on imperatival force because of the imperative main verb and so characterize the ongoing mandatory process of discipleship to Jesus" (Wilkins, 951). A disciple, then, is one who has believed on Jesus Christ and expressed this faith by being baptized. He remains in the fellowship of the believers that he might be taught the truths of the faith (Acts 2:41-47). He is then able to go out and win others and teach them. This was the pattern of the New Testament church (2 Tim. 2:1-2)" (Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, 1:107). We are to make disciples of our Lord, not of ourselves.

*The promise*—"I am with you always." It's a good thing we don't have to do it alone. Not only is the mission *our* mission, but the One who commissioned us is with us always to enable us to carry out his orders. What's more, we have received the promise of the Father, the Holy Spirit, who enables us to be Christ's witnesses "to the ends of the earth" (Ac 1:8).

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## Word Studies/Notes

v. 18 *all authority* Jesus has the “fullest possible authority.” The expression “in heaven and on earth” is a *merism*, one example of the figure of speech *synecdoche* in which totality is expressed by contrasting parts (e.g., high and low, young and old, day and night, etc.). Jesus has the final say in all things in heaven and on earth. “He is making clear that the limitations that applied throughout the incarnation no longer apply to him. He has supreme authority throughout the universe” (Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, 745, 46).

v. 18 *in heaven, on earth* An example of *merism*, a figure of speech that refers to the whole of something by referring to its extremes, e.g., “hook, line, and sinker,” “high and low,” “day and night.”

v. 18 *has been given* The *passive voice* is sometimes used to indicate God’s doing, and when it is, it’s classified as a *divine passive*. God gave Jesus full authority.

v. 19 *make disciples* “The main command of Christ’s commission is ‘make disciples’ (*mathēteusate*). Too much and too little have often been made of this observation. Too much is made of it when the disciples’ ‘going’ is overly subordinated, so that Jesus’ charge is to proselytize merely where one is. Matthew frequently uses ‘go’ as an introductory circumstantial participle that is rightly translated as coordinate to the main verb—here ‘Go and make’ (cf. 2:8; 9:13; 11:4; 17:27; 28:7). Too little is made of it when all attention is centered on the command to ‘go,’ as in countless appeals for missionary candidates, so that foreign missions are elevated to a higher status of Christian service than other forms of spiritual activity” (Craig Blomberg, *Matthew*, NAC, 431). “The Great Commission contains *one primary, central command*, the imperative ‘make disciples,’ with *three subordinate participles*, ‘go,’ ‘baptizing,’ and ‘teaching.’ The imperative explains the central thrust of the commission while the participles describe aspects of the process. These subordinate participles *take on imperatival force* [cf., NJB, TEV] because of the imperative main verb and so characterize the ongoing mandatory process of discipleship to Jesus” (Wilkins, 951 italics added; cf., the *NET Bible*, 27tn on Mt. 28:19).

v. 19 *go* The word translated “go” is actually a participle like “baptizing” and “teaching” but is translated as an *imperative* in most

English versions because of its grammatical connection to the command “make disciples.”

v. 19 *baptizing* “It may be best to see baptizing as Jesus’ way of summarizing the evangelistic half of the disciples’ ministry. The third participle, teaching (Matt. 28:20), represents the other half of the disciples’ ministry—the edification of those who are already believers” (Stuart K. Weber, *Matthew*, HNTC, 485).

v. 19 *name* “The singular ‘name’ followed by the threefold reference to ‘Father, Son, and Holy Spirit’ suggests both unity and plurality in the Godhead. Here is the clearest Trinitarian ‘formula’ anywhere in the Gospels” (Blomberg, 432).

v. 19 *teaching* “. . . indicates the process by which disciples of Jesus are continually transformed through discipleship and the discipling process. *Discipleship* is the process by which a disciple (Christian) is transformed, while *discipling* is the involvement of one disciple helping another to grow in his or her discipleship” (Wilkins, 956).

v. 20 *obey* Cf. “teaching them to keep all the instructions I have given you” (EHV), or “training them to follow all the teaching I have given you.”

v. 20 *with you* “The disciple is not going to be left to serve God as well as he can in the light of what he has learned from the things Jesus has commanded. The disciple will find that he has a great companion as he goes on his way through life” (Morris, 749).



## APPLY THE TEXT

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### CENTRAL MESSAGE OF THE TEXT

God has given Jesus all authority, so in obedience to his command,  
go make disciples of all people, remembering he is with you.

### CENTRAL MESSAGE FOR YOUR LIFE

(Rewrite the Central Message above to personally apply to your own life)



## 3 LIVING QUESTIONS

The “Living Questions” are simple questions we may ask of any text in order to apply the Bible to our life. Answer the questions below as personally as you can.

1. What does this passage teach me about God?

2. What does this passage teach me about myself?

3. What does this passage lead me to do?



## FAMILY TALK

When my youngest son entered junior high, he almost chose band as an elective. Praise God he didn't because I don't have what it takes to be a band parent. Band in Texas is a lifestyle, a beast of an extracurricular activity. You don't just drop and go as a band parent; you travel the earth going to competitions and games. You'd better be strong or prepared to work out because you've got heavy, expensive equipment to schlep around. You must commit to fundraising, like upper-level-management-starting-salary kind of money. I haven't even touched on the booster club... As a band parent, you've got to be extraordinarily committed to living your whole life for this band thing. I'm convinced if we could commit to Biblical discipleship with half the intensity of a band parent, the world would change. So often we think of discipleship as taking our kids to church on Sunday with bonus points for getting them there on Wednesdays or camp. Discipleship isn't a church program but a lifestyle. As Deuteronomy 6 describes, we invite God into our daily life and naturally talk about our faith with our kids from sunup to sundown. As parents, we should be hyper-vigilantly looking for opportunities to share the Gospel with our kids. Let's pause movies to talk about important topics, guide our kids through godly character development, diligently teach them integrity and how to work hard in the name of Jesus and consistently offer praise and prayers throughout the day. For the next week, challenge yourself to talk about God at least three times daily. Your child's greatest discipler is you! We're praying for you.

### What Does The Bible Say?

Read Matthew 28:18-20

1. What did Jesus tell the disciples to do?
2. In whose name were they to baptize others?
3. What did Jesus tell the disciples to teach?

### What Do You Think?

Explain what go, baptize and teach have to do with discipleship?

### What Do You Do?

Have each person in your family think of a different country that starts with the same letter as their name. Have them learn how to say hello and Jesus in the native language and pray for that country.

## CORE COMPETENCY: Disciple-Making

I multiply godly beliefs, qualities and behaviors in others to encourage them to grow in Christ.

## MEMORY VERSE: Habakkuk 2:14

*"For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea."*

## KidPIX COUPON

Earn 1 KidPIX Token by completing the CENTRALKids Bible Study on this page and another token by memorizing and reciting the memory verse for this week.

Questions: [kids@wearecentral.org](mailto:kids@wearecentral.org)

- \_\_\_\_\_ I completed my Bible Study
- \_\_\_\_\_ I memorized this week's verse
- \_\_\_\_\_ I brought my Bible to church
- \_\_\_\_\_ I brought a friend



CHILD'S NAME

GRADE

PARENT SIGNATURE

# OUR CORE COMPETENCIES

## CENTRAL BELIEFS

**Authority of the Bible** (2 Timothy 3:16-17)  
*I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.*

**Church** (Ephesians 4:15-16)

*I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.*

**Eternity** (John 14:1-4)

*I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.*

**The Holy Spirit** (Romans 8:9)

*I believe the Holy Spirit convicts, calls, converts and changes me as a child of God.*

**Humanity** (John 3:16)

*I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.*

**Identity in Christ** (John 1:12)

*I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.*

**Jesus Christ** (Hebrews 1:1-4)

*I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God who became man, died for sinners and rose from the dead.*

**Life Purpose** (Acts 20:24)

*I believe I am a steward of God's resources and have been redeemed to participate in His Kingdom purposes for His glory.*

**Personal God** (Psalm 121:1-2)

*I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.*

**Salvation by Grace** (Ephesians 2:8-9)

*I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.*



## CENTRAL VIRTUES

**Love** (1 John 4:10-12)

*I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.*

**Joy** (John 15:11)

*I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.*

**Peace** (Philippians 4:6-7)

*I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself and others.*

**Patience** (Proverbs 14:29)

*I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.*

**Kindness/Goodness** (1 Thessalonians 5:15)

*I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others*

**Faithfulness** (Proverbs 3:3-4)

*I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.*

**Gentleness** (Philippians 4:5)

*I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.*

**Self-Control** (Titus 2:11-13)

*I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.*

**Grace** (Colossians 3:13)

*I demonstrate forgiveness, mercy and generosity to others, even when they have offended me.*

**Hope** (1 Peter 1:3-5)

*I have a growing anticipation of God's promises and my secure eternity with Him.*

**Humility** (Philippians 2:3-4)

*I choose to esteem others above myself.*



## CENTRAL PRACTICES

**Bible Study** (Hebrews 4:12)

*I study the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.*

**Biblical Community** (Acts 2:44-47)

*I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.*

**Compassion** (Psalm 82:3-4)

*I seek to serve the last, the least and the lost in my community.*

**Disciple-Making** (2 Timothy 2:2)

*I multiply godly beliefs, virtues and practices in others to encourage their spiritual growth in Christ.*

**Evangelism** (Acts 1:8)

*I share Jesus with others through personal proclamation and demonstration of the gospel.*

**Generosity** (2 Corinthians 9:6-11)

*I gladly give my resources to fulfill God's purposes.*

**Prayer** (Psalm 66:16-20)

*I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.*

**Single-Mindedness** (Matthew 6:33)

*I focus on God and His priorities for my life.*

**Spiritual Gifts** (Romans 12:4-6)

*I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.*

**Worship** (Psalm 95:1-7)

*I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.*

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**Stephanie Thomas** (B.B.A University of Texas at Arlington). Stephanie is married to James and they have four children: Elijah, Levi, Ella and Simon. Stephanie has attended Central Bible Church for more than 20 years, has been on staff since 2014, and now serves as Children's Minister.

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