

The **ENTRUSTED Leader's Workbook**
***“Barnabas”* Edition**

Seven Core Values that Impact Every Leader-to-Follower Relationship:
HEART-MISSION-APPROACH-STABILITY-LIFESTYLE-FORTITUDE-WORLDVIEW

Lesson Six: The Mission of Making Disciples

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Lesson Six: The Mission of Making Disciples

CORE VALUE: A MISSION for leading characterized by a faithful commitment to multiplying followers of Jesus Christ that supersedes all other marketplace endeavors.

BIBLE VERSE(S): Matthew 28:16-20

ONE SIMPLE TRUTH: Jesus Christ calls every follower to personally participate in the church's mission of making disciples.

APPLICATION: To become the leader God desires you must adopt this mission as the top priority of your life, even as you lead in the marketplace.

Have you ever asked yourself the question: Why do I do what I do? Why do I work in a particular profession? Why do I volunteer my time in a certain charity? Why do I associate with this group or that? An answer to these types of questions might be: To provide financially for my family. I love my job. I want to give back to the community. I enjoy socializing with this group or that group, just to name a few.

Many people never get beyond these obvious answers. I want the reader to dig deeper for an answer that goes to the core of his or her existence. Ask yourself: What is the point of what I do? Does what I strive to accomplish have enduring value? Can you say your efforts bring meaning and purpose to your life? Will the results of what you do carry on into eternity?

Let me ask you a related question: What mission shapes your life? Whether you realize it or not, your life exists conjoined to some agenda. How you choose to invest your life will generate some sense of meaning and importance to your existence. Down deep inside, we all want to know that our life has an enduring value. This need drives a

person to choose a life mission to pursue. How are you investing your life? Is the return on the investment of your life significant, enduring, and eternal?

What priorities dominate your schedule? The mission in which you choose to invest your life will dictate your priorities. Once a person chooses a mission, he or she typically orders the time and energy of his or her life accordingly to accomplish the objective. Your calendar reflects your mission. Look back over the past few years and calculate where you have invested the majority of your waking hours and you will develop a good picture of the mission or agenda to which your life is conjoined.

Every leader strives to accomplish a mission. People adopt their mission by a variety of means. The wise leader, guided by a heart willing to do all God asks, selects a mission through prayer, the study of God's word, and the counsel of others. The foolish leader allows circumstances, culture, and the desires of a dysfunctional heart to guide the choice of a life mission. How did you select a mission in which to invest your life?

Commonly pursued missions are the following: pleasure, money, fame, influence, and power. These "things of men" ultimately prove to be meaningless. A leader will not find security or significance from these earthly endeavors. A leader will not acquire an enduring or eternal return on the investment of his or her life no matter how much worldly success one experiences pursuing these missions. Have you ever calculated a return on investment for your life?

Jesus Christ has already designated the mission for the church. Jesus expects his followers to invest their lives in pursuit of this mission. This mission returns eternal significance and purpose. No greater return on the investment of your life exists than serving this mission. One's priorities will quickly come into alignment with God's will

once he or she allows the mission of Jesus to supersede all other marketplace endeavors. Jesus commanded His followers to go into the world and make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:16-20). This mission extends to every opportunity a leader has to lead, even in marketplace. God looks for leaders who are willing to leverage their leadership opportunities to make disciples.

A misconception exists in the church today in regard to the mission of making disciples. Many followers of Jesus assume that this mission only relates to professional ministers, but not the laity. Let us be clear; Jesus has called EVERY one of his followers to personally participate in the mission of making disciples. Simply contributing money to professional ministry efforts does not fully satisfy this call. God expects every follower of Jesus Christ to participate in the mission of making disciples within his or her sphere of influence. No exclusions from this effort exist.

Think about the following question for a few minutes. Personalize this question and ask it to yourself.

Is a “Born Again” Christian free to invest the “talents” of his or her life in any “MISSION” he or she desires, as long as the pursuit is done in a “godly” fashion and does not directly violate God’s Word?

On the surface, this question sounds God honoring and Biblical, doesn’t it? Unfortunately, it’s NOT! A “Born Again” Christian does not possess the freedom to invest the “talents” of one’s life however he or she sees fit. Here’s the problem with this statement. You did not just choose to follow Jesus, he purchased your life for his purpose. The Apostle Paul said, “...You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.” (1 Corinthians 6:19-20 NIV) Do you know the purchase price paid by God for our life? Consider the words of the Apostle John as he describes

Jesus in Revelation 5:9-10: “You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth.” (NIV) Jesus purchased you with his blood to serve God’s mission on earth. Consequently, Jesus owns the rights to your life and he has assigned you to serve his agenda. To become the leader God desires you must adopt this mission as the top priority of your life, even as you lead in the marketplace.

I am on a mission to mobilize a generation of skilled marketplace leaders who will uphold the seven core values of an Entrusted leader and leverage every opportunity for leadership to multiply followers of Jesus Christ. I believe this mission appears consistent with God’s calling to make disciples. This life mission brings eternal meaning and purpose to my life. This quest determines the priorities of my life and guides the investment of my time and energy. The genesis of this mission can be traced directly to a desire to obey Jesus’ command to go forth and make disciples of all nations. I view the return on investment of my life strictly from an eternal perspective. I hold out the hope to someday hear my master say: “...Well done, good and faithful servant! ...Come and share your master’s happiness!” (Matthew 25:21 NIV)

Scholars commonly refer to this mission of Jesus for his followers as the Great Commission. Matthew recorded the words of Jesus’ final instructions to his disciples in chapter twenty-eight, verses sixteen through twenty of his gospel. To fully appreciate the urgency of this mission entrusted by the master to his servants, one must understand the broader context within which Jesus spoke these words. Read chapters 27 and 28 of the gospel of Matthew. Also, read Acts 1:1-11 and then answer the following questions.

Questions of the Biblical Text¹ (Matthew 27:32 – 28:10)

What is the main event described in Matt. 27:32 - 44? _____

What is described in Matt. 27:45-55? _____

What happened to Jesus' body after he died by crucifixion? _____

According to Matt. 27:66 what two actions did Pilate order to be taken to make the tomb of Jesus as secure as possible to insure that his body was not stolen by his disciples?

1. _____

2. _____

What is the main event described in Matt. 28:1-10? _____

Questions of the Bible Text (Acts 1:1-11)

According to Acts 1:3 what did Jesus do after he was resurrected from the dead?

How many days was Jesus on the earth after his resurrection? _____

What did Jesus speak about during this forty day period? _____

When asked about the kingdom of God Jesus told his disciples they would receive the power of the Holy Spirit for a specific mission. What is this mission? _____

What happened immediately after Jesus command his disciples to be his witnesses to the end of the world?

After Jesus disappeared, two men dressed in white appeared.

Where did they explain Jesus had gone? _____

What promise did they give the disciples? _____

Commentary

Two passages of scripture, Matthew 27:32 - 28:10 and Acts 1:1-11, set the historical context within which Jesus spoke the words of the Great Commission recorded

¹ Unless otherwise noted the questions listed in *The ENTRUSTED Leader's Workbook* are based on: *The Holy Bible: New International Version* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996, c1984)

in Matthew 28:16-20. Matthew records for us the key events which precede Jesus assigning the Great Commission to his followers. In the book of Acts, Luke records the key events that surround and follow Jesus' command to make disciples.

We pick up the story of Jesus' final days on earth in Matthew chapter twenty-seven. The rulers of Israel decided Jesus had to die. They turned him over to the Roman Governor Pontius Pilate and requested Jesus' execution. The soldiers took Jesus to the Praetorium. They stripped, mocked, spat upon, and beat God's only Son. Next, on a place named Golgotha, Jesus was crucified. Historically, crucifixion, nailing someone to a cross, was a common method of execution by the Romans in the first century.

Shortly after the ninth hour, Jesus died. A man by the name of Joseph asked Pilate if he could take charge of Jesus' body. Pilate agreed, so Joseph took the Lord's body, wrapped it in linen, placed it in a tomb, and rolled a big rock in front of the entrance. Fearing that his disciples might try to steal Jesus' body, the rulers of Israel asked Pilate to secure the tomb. Pilate ordered the tomb be secured by putting a seal outside the entrance and posting a guard.

Early the day following the Sabbath, Mary Magdalene and Mary went to visit the tomb. Shockingly, these women found the tomb empty. An angel told Mary Magdalene and Mary that Jesus had risen from the dead. The angel told the women to go to Galilee where they would see Jesus alive.

Luke begins his account of the Acts of the Apostles with Jesus' resurrection which is where Matthew concludes his gospel. Luke records that after Jesus rose from the dead, he appeared to his disciples over a forty day period. During this time, Jesus gave many convincing proofs that he was really alive. He spoke about the kingdom of Heaven.

At the end of this forty day period, Jesus ascended into heaven. Suddenly, two men dressed in white appeared to Jesus' disciples and promised them that Jesus would return to earth someday just as he departed.

Jesus spoke the Great Commission (Matthew 28:16-20) during this forty day period between his resurrection and ascension. This time brief time period establishes the historical context within which Jesus instructed his followers to go and make disciples. The communication of the mission of Jesus for his followers stands apart from the many lessons taught by him during the three year public ministry that preceded his death. Jesus spoke these words literally during his final hours on earth. No time remained for small talk. Jesus only had time to communicate the most important of instructions to his followers. The context of Jesus' pending departure should suggest to his followers a sense of urgency and importance to the mission of making disciples.

During this forty day period, Jesus also promised his disciples that he would return. Just as the master in the Parable of the Talents expected his servants to faithfully serve what had been entrusted to them while he was on a long journey, so also I believe Jesus expects each of his followers to faithfully serve his instruction to go and make disciples until he returns. The promise of Jesus' second coming suggests to his followers a sense of stewardship and accountability to one's service to the mission of making disciples during his absence.

Read Matthew 28:16 – 20 again and answer the following questions:

Questions of the Bible Text (Matthew 28:16-20)

What did Jesus tell his disciples had been given to him? _____

What four actions did Jesus instruct his disciples to take?

1.

2.

3.

4.

What promise did Jesus give to his disciples? _____

Questions of Interpretation (Matthew 28:16-20)

Why was it important that Jesus reassure his disciples the extent of his authority before he gave them their final marching order?

What did Jesus mean when he told his followers to “go”?

What is a disciple and how do you make one?

What does baptizing have to do with making a disciple?

What does teaching have to do with making a disciple?

When is the end of the age?

In what ways is Jesus always with us?

Commentary

Perhaps more than any other passage of scripture you will study in the ENTRUSTED Leader’s Workbook, Matthew 28:16-20 requires a thorough understanding of the key terms and grammatical construction of the sentences. As a leader you must acquire an accurate interpretation of these verses if you hope to develop an appreciation of how this mission applies where you lead in the marketplace. The Great Commissions contains five key terms relevant to our study: authority, go, make disciples, baptizing,

and teaching. We will begin by considering the original Greek term and its meaning of each of these words.

The English word “authority” comes from the Greek term *exousia*. The risen Lord Jesus tells his disciples that he possesses ALL “authority.” Does he? Do you believe Jesus possesses all authority in heaven and on earth? How you answer this question will dramatically impact the approach you take to making disciples. The original group of disciples believed Jesus possessed all authority. These followers of Jesus endured hardship, persecution, and sacrificed everything they had to accomplish this mission in part because these disciples truly believed they were acting on behalf of the sovereign ruler of heaven and earth.

Jesus claims to have authority - the power to choose and act however he saw fit. He exercised this right to set the agenda for his followers based on this unlimited authority. Jesus professed the power to rule, and he expected his will and commands to be obeyed. This absolute authority provides the basis upon which Jesus assigned The Great Commission to his followers. Consider Strong’s definition of authority:

“**1849** ἐξουσία [*exousia* /ex·oo·see·ah/] ... **1** power of choice, liberty of doing as one pleases. ... **3** the power of authority (influence) and of right (privilege). **4** the power of rule or government (the power of him whose will and commands must be submitted to by others and obeyed). ...”²

Jesus’ claim of authority seems out of place, bold, and unexpected. The events surrounding Jesus’ capture, trial, and execution might suggest that Jesus lacked the power or authority to defend and control what was happening to him. Nothing could be farther

²James Strong, *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible : Showing Every Word of the Test of the Common English Version of the Canonical Books, and Every Occurrence of Each Word in Regular Order.*, electronic ed. (Ontario: Woodside Bible Fellowship., 1996), G1849.

from the reality of the situation. Jesus voluntarily submitted to humiliation and suffering to pay the penalty our sin deserves and to purchase us for God. Jesus assured his followers that regardless of how recent events may look he possessed authority over all of heaven and earth. Nothing escapes Jesus' rule. The truth of Jesus' authority becomes significant to his followers for two reasons. First of all, Jesus' authority establishes his right to entrust the mission of making disciples to his followers for all of time. Secondly, Jesus' followers have the implied authority to move into the world and make disciples because believers act on Jesus' authority.

Jesus still possesses all authority today. Jesus currently sits at the right hand of the Father waiting the command to return to earth. The mission entrusted to his followers during his absence has not changed. Modern day followers of Jesus Christ can pursue the mission of making disciples with the peace of mind that one acts on the basis of Jesus' authority, not just human authority.

After Jesus established the scope and reality of his authority he immediately exercised his control by telling his followers what he wanted them to do once he had departed. The term "therefore" stands as the key connection between Jesus' authority and the Great Commission. Jesus told his disciples that he had the right to rule as he saw fit in heaven and earth and based on this authority he told his followers to go and make disciples. Matthew 28:16-20 contains Jesus' final marching orders for his disciples.

Jesus instructed his followers to "go and make disciples." To fully appreciate the force of this command, one must understand the construction of the original Greek grammar. If one only considers the English translation, a temptation exists to place an emphasis on the word "go". One could easily assume that obedience to The Great

Commissions requires moving geographically from our present location to another and then making disciples. Such an emphasis on the verb “go” leads to an improper interpretation and application. The word “go” in the Greek exists as a participle functioning as the secondary verb in the sentence. I believe the force of this sentence conveys the instruction: “as you are ‘going’ about the normal course of your life I want you to accomplish something”. The something involves “making disciples.”

The primary verb of this sentence is “make disciples.” This action carries the force of what Jesus is saying in this passage. The Greek word for “make disciples” is an imperative. Jesus is giving his followers a command or an order. Making disciples is not a suggestion or nice thing to do if we have time. Based on his authority as ruler over all heaven and earth, Jesus commands that his followers reproduce other followers wherever they might be going in life. There is no room for ignoring or disobeying this command. This order extends to all followers of Jesus Christ for all of time until his second coming. This command extends to every facet of life, even as one leads in the marketplace. The mission Jesus assigned suggests to modern day leaders: as a Christ follower goes about the normal course of leading, he or she should use every opportunity and circumstance to make disciples. Leaders, who desire to follow Christ, must view every relationship from the perspective of the potential of engaging in the process of disciple making.

An obvious question arises at this point. If all Christ followers stand responsible to “make disciples,” then how does one make disciples? What defines a disciple? How does a leader proceed to make one? What is the process or steps involved? Jesus helps answer this question with two key terms that describe the process. Jesus tells us to “baptize” and “teach.” The idea of baptizing addresses the act of conversion or

justification. The process of making disciples starts with evangelism. Believers must be quick and ready to share one's faith and the truth of the gospel with those that do not know the Lord Jesus as their personal savior. The idea of teaching addresses a believer's life long journey of spiritual growth and maturing, sanctification, that starts at the moment of conversion and continues for the rest of one's time on earth. The primary emphasis involves teaching a new convert God's Word and encouraging them to apply and obey all Jesus taught. The process of disciple making appears in more detail in the next lesson.

Application

Jesus commanded all his followers to go and make disciples. Believers should view this mission as an unbelievable opportunity, not an obligation. Incredibly, the ruler of heaven and earth has included the efforts of Christ followers in his mission of building his kingdom on earth. Go back and reconsider the opening questions of this lesson in light of the opportunity to make disciples. Why do I do what I do? Why do I work in a particular profession? Why do I volunteer my time in a certain charity? Why do I associate with this group or that? The opportunity to make disciples brings an eternal perspective and enduring meaning to the answer to every one of these questions. For example: I work in a particular profession because God intends to use me as his ambassador among those I lead.

God does not expect a believer to "go" somewhere different to apply this mission. If you truly believe it is God's will for you to lead wherever it is you lead, then you are already positioned where God wants you to make disciples. Consider Jesus' words as recorded by the Apostle John in chapter four verse thirty-five of his gospel: "Do you not

say, ‘Four months more and then the harvest’? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest.” (NIV) As a modern day follower of Jesus Christ who leads in the marketplace a one already labors in a mission field that stands ripe for making disciples. Obedience to serving the mission of making disciples probably does not require you to change leadership positions or resign your job to enter the professional ministry. God wants to use you right now, right where you are. Think of it this way, there are lives you can touch for the cause of Christ where you currently lead that no other follower of Jesus Christ can reach.

Those who know me well know that I am not a fan of “water-cooler” evangelism. I do not believe God has called us to stand by the company coffee pot handing out religious tracks for Jesus. Making disciples involves much more than simply testifying vocally the gospel to one’s work associates. As a marketplace leader, I believe a better approach involves building trusting and authentic relationships with those we lead. The public demonstration of our faith as seen by others in our actions and decisions, how we lead, ultimately earns the right to vocalize our faith at the appropriate time. Conversely, if our actions and decisions as a leader do not mirror our faith then by default our words will fall on the deaf ears of those we lead and our perception will be one of a hypocrite. The next lesson will look more specifically into how a leader can develop and implement a plan to make disciples where one leads others.

Conclusion

Every follower of Jesus Christ is called to personally participate in the church’s mission of making disciples. To become the leader God desires you must adopt this mission as the top priority of your life, even as you lead in the marketplace. God instructs

each ENTRUSTED Leader to look for opportunities to make disciples wherever he or she leads others. This instruction exists as part of God's "will" for every believer.

One great aspect of God's call to make disciples suggests that in most cases a leader who follows Christ does not have to go anywhere to faithfully serve the Lord's will. God desires and intends to use you right where you are. Your family, neighborhood, and workplace constitute fields ripe for the harvest. God has already entrusted all you need to lead and make disciples. The question of faithfulness resides with you. You have the choice to orient your will on God's will and view your world from the vantage point of disciple making opportunities.

The first core value of an ENTRUSTED leader is: A HEART willing to do all God asks. This lesson introduced us to the second core value: A MISSION for leading characterized by a faithful commitment to multiplying followers of Jesus Christ that supersedes all other marketplace endeavors. Core value one provides the standard by which the other six are measured. We cannot say we are willing to enact all God asks unless we are willing to adopt the mission of making disciples as the top priority of where we lead others. Now that we have studied this decision point in regard to serving God's will, go before God in the power of the Holy Spirit and ask him to reveal to you the truth of these passages and how they may apply to your particular situation as a leader. This lesson introduced "The What" of God's mission for a follower of Jesus Christ; which focuses on disciple making. The next lesson will begin to answer the question of "How" one sets about making disciples as he or she goes about leading others.