

Doubling Groups #1: The Mandate

Good Questions: These Lessons Have Groups Talking

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The Mandate¹

OPEN

- Let's each share our name and who shared the gospel with you before you were a Christian.¹

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1. Imagine you have been hurt in a terrible accident. You only have a little while to live. Your family is gathered around you. You are, for the moment, lucid and relatively pain free. What do you want to say to your family and loved ones?²
2. How many things did Jesus tell his disciples to do in this final mandate?³
3. What exactly is a disciple?⁴
4. Is this the same as if Jesus had said, "Tell people about me."⁵
5. There are three participles in the Greek that describe how we are to make disciples. These are supporting verbs (often ending in ing). What are they in this passage?⁶
6. This is a little bit of a "duh" question, but why was it so important to Jesus to communicate to his disciples to make disciples?
7. What are the benefits to us if we make disciples? What are the benefits to those we make disciples of? What are the benefits to God?
8. What is the cost if we don't? Again, what is the cost to us? What is the cost to outsiders? What is the cost to God?⁷
9. How do you take that last phrase? Is Jesus with us more if we are engaged in the task of making disciples?⁸
10. What are some means believers have used to fulfill this mandate? In other words, Billy Graham-style evangelistic crusades is one. Radio and TV is another. Bus ministry is a third. Let's make a long list on the board.

¹You might ask when everyone is finished: what if they hadn't shared? Where would you be?

²Obviously, the point is that these are Jesus' last words and must have been crucially important to Jesus.

³Only one: make disciples.

⁴Learner; student.

⁵No. What he told us to do was make disciples, not, "everyone go out and witness and hope for the best."

⁶Going, baptizing, teaching to observe.

⁷Two great questions you can ask most every week: what are the benefits of following God? What does it cost if we don't?

⁸Obviously God is everywhere and He is with us always. But, I do believe there is a special sense of His presence as we engage in His work in the power of the Holy Spirit.

11. There is a world-wide movement of groups⁹ of various kinds that are working to fulfill this mandate through their groups doubling every two years or less. Let's work through the math of why this is one¹⁰ effective method of fulfilling this mandate. Doubling every two years or less translates into 40% annual growth, or a group of 10 growing to 14 in one year, and 14 to 20 the second year. Does this seem possible to you—that a group of 10 could grow from 10 to 14 in a year?¹¹
12. Imagine a group did it a little more rapidly. Suppose a group of 10 doubled every 18 months. How many would they reach in 10 years?¹²
13. Based on this, how would you rate the idea of doubling groups as a method of fulfilling the mandate of the Great Commission, relative to some of the other methods we have looked at?¹³
14. Romans 1.14 - 17. Why does Paul say he is obligated? How does your translation treat this word, "obligated"?¹⁴

⁹These groups can be Sunday School style groups, independent house churches, home cells, networked house churches, open groups, closed groups. They can be independent small groups, or small groups that are part of a mid-sized group. Some Sunday School classes work this way. They may have 50 in the group, but are composed of smaller care groups of about ten. If you are in a large Sunday School class, this might be the easier path to take.

¹⁰The point is that it is one effective method. Not to say that others are not good methods. This is a good one as well.

¹¹I often ask groups: if I offered you a million dollars could you get it done? Do you think we could do it if we offered everyone in the group \$10,000 to grow from 10 to 14? Could we do it to get sinners out of hell and into heaven? Perhaps you are more Calvinistic than that. Could we do it because Jesus said to?

¹² Start:	10
Eighteen months:	20
3 years:	40
4.5 years:	80
6 years:	160
7.5 years	320
9 years	640
Sometime in the 10 th year:	1000

¹³Surely we could all agree this is one good method.

¹⁴To Greeks and non-Greeks alike, to the wise and the ignorant, I am under obligation;
Romans 1:14 (NAB)

I have a duty to all people—Greeks and those who are not Greeks, the wise and the foolish.
Romans 1:14 (NCV)

For I have a great sense of obligation to people in both the civilized world and the rest of the world, to the educated and uneducated alike. Romans 1:14 (NLT)

Then I should like you to know, my brothers, that I have long intended to come to you (but
(continued...))

15. Is it true of us? Do we have a debt, an obligation, a duty to spread the gospel?¹⁵
16. Do you live with a sense of debt or duty or obligation to spread the gospel?
17. Should we live with a sense of debt, duty and obligation to those who do not know Christ?
18. 2 Thessalonians 3:1. What adjective did Paul use to describe how he longed for and prayed for the gospel to spread?¹⁶
19. Would you say it is true of our church, that the gospel is spreading rapidly through our church and our group?
20. What do we do when we discover we are doing something we should not, or not doing something we should?¹⁷
21. Let's pray a prayer that has two parts. Let's pray a prayer of repentance that we have not fulfilled the obligation that we have. And, let's pray that the gospel would spread and spread rapidly through us. In weeks to come, we will look at more detail about how this can happen, but for now, let's spend some time in prayer that the gospel would spread rapidly through us.

Good questions are available on hundreds of topics and texts. For details, see www.joshhunt.com/vault.htm and www.joshhunt.com/sunday-school.htm

1. Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 28:19 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, 28:20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." Matthew 28:18-20 (NIV)

I am obligated both to Greeks and barbarians, both to the wise and the foolish. 1:15 So I am eager to preach the good news to you also who are in Rome. 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is God's power for salvation to everyone who believes, first to the Jew, and

¹⁴(...continued)

something has always prevented me), for I should like to see some results among you, as I have among other Gentiles. I feel myself under a sort of universal obligation, I owe something to all men, from cultured Greek to ignorant savage. That is why I want, as far as my ability will carry me, to preach the Gospel to you who live in Rome as well. Romans 1:13-14 (Phillips NT)

For I owe a great debt to you and to everyone else, both to civilized people and uncivilized alike; yes, to the educated and uneducated alike. Romans 1:14 (TLB)

¹⁵One effective method in teaching is the use of the repeated phrase. I would intentionally say it over and over in this section: debt, duty, obligation; debt, duty, obligation.

¹⁶I often hear people speak of the glory of "slow, steady growth." Paul didn't speak of that glory. He spoke of the glory of rapid growth.

¹⁷We repent. We sorrowfully repent. We ask for forgiveness. We receive grace. We bask in grace. And, we go out in the power of the Holy Spirit seeking to do better.

also to the Greek. 1:17 For in it God's righteousness is revealed from faith to faith, just as it is written: The righteous will live by faith. Romans 1:14-17 (HCSB)

Finally, brothers, pray for us that the message of the Lord may spread rapidly and be honored, just as it was with you. 2 Thessalonians 3:1 (NIV)