

5 Permissions of the Great Commission

Jesus gave His commission to the early church in Matthew 28:18-20. Though it is one of several commissions given by Jesus, the church-at-large has come to call this statement: *The Great Commission*. Let me remind us what it says,

Jesus came near and said to them, "All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. 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 everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."
([CSB](#))

In the Western portion of the world where I live, we preach The Great Commission and plenty of affirming nods are given. However, it is not practiced very well. To fulfill The Great Commission, we need change. Allow me to offer five potential changes we need and one reminder to encourage you in the changes.

Change #1: Move from working as campus chaplains to advancing as kingdom

missionaries. Churches are not to hide on campuses. Jesus tells us to "go" with a verb that means continual activity. Wherever there are people in our communities and around the world, the church needs to be present as ambassadors of God's Kingdom. We should treat a church campus as a launching pad instead of an Evangelical monastery.

Change #2: Move from participating in religious programs to becoming lifestyle disciple-

makers. We often default to building programs because they are the paths of least resistance. Meanwhile, disciple-making is messy. Programmatic growth can be accomplished even when it is the last-ditch effort of a spiritually sterile ministry. The numbers in attendance fool us into thinking that Kingdom growth is occurring. The metrics that numbers equal success is simply not enough. We need to switch to a desire for relationships that result in eternal transformations.

Change #3: Move from a perceived home field to active global engagement.

We do not live in a spiritual Promised Land. Rather, the church is in exile in a spiritual Babylon. As a believer, you may live in a country with religious freedom and even one built on Judeo-Christian virtues but you do not yet fully live in the Kingdom of God. Our commission is to take the gospel to our community and not stop there. God calls each church to the peoples of the world (see, people groups, ethnic groups, all nations). Your church should consider itself as a missionary outpost in your community and a global sending center for God's work in the world. Each believer is not here to simply keep the church programs populated. Each believer is commissioned as a global missionary to pierce the darkness with the light of the Gospel.

Change #4: Move from creating consumers of religion to community builders of the

church. Christians are the purveyors of hope because of our own spiritual transformation. In baptism, we declare that we've surrendered to the sovereignty of Christ. Secondly, baptism

is a public alignment with a church family. At my baptism, I said, “I’m one with you in God’s mission.” As individual believers and as congregational families, we need to kill the consumer mentality. It should die a quick death so we can have a hyper-focus on the need for the lost to be saved and the church to be built by Christ’s work through us.

Change #5: Move from being knowledge junkies to Jesus followers. Too often, our knowledge has outpaced our obedience. As church leaders, it is easier to desire behavior modification from masters of biblical trivial pursuit than deal with accountability for life change. But that is not discipleship. In his book *The Divine Conspiracy*, Dallas Willard said, “The gospel of sin management has produced vampire Christians who want Jesus for his blood and little else.” We need to move from just playing mental games with the Bible to becoming obedient to the Bible. Jesus wants followers. He began the apostles’ work with “Come” and ended his training with “Go.”

One Empowering Reminder: The authority and presence of Jesus is what makes all of this a reality. Jesus has all of the authority and promised to never desert us. With His declaration, we can race after His commission. We know that none of the five changes are possible by our own wit and self-determination. Jesus, however, loves to do the impossible. His authority and presence at work in your church will bridge an impossible divide and accomplish miraculous Kingdom work.

I hope that all of our churches will once again lean into the beauty and the mission of Jesus’ work in this world.

> [Read more from Philip.](#)

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