MISSION POSSIBLE
Christ's Great Commission
Study Two

Our Commitment to Christ's Commission

Matthew 28:16–20

Do you share the message? Do you know that is the responsibility of every child of God? Do you know that you have been commissioned? Oh, I'm not talking about ministry in the formal sense or vocational Christian service. I know a very, very small segment of humanity falls into that category. Jesus did not commission us to become clergy. He did not commission us to carry our pastor with us wherever we go so that he might share the news. He commissioned you and me individually with the plan that has never been replaced with another. It's one person telling another how to find bread, how to locate pure water that will satisfy forever.

—Charles R. Swindoll

At first, Matthew, Peter, John, and the other disciples began following Jesus, the *teacher*. As Jesus taught from village to village, they viewed Him as *prophet*. As Jesus healed every disease and ailment, they viewed Him as *Messiah*. Then as *friend*. And then as the Master who washed feet like a *servant*. But when they stood before the resurrected Jesus on that mountain in Galilee, they viewed their Messiah and friend as *God who is over all*.

So He has resurrected. Now what? The Great Commission. In just a few verses, Matthew captured the words of the risen Jesus to the disciples as well as to those of us today who follow Jesus. It's the divine game plan until the return of the Divine Son.

In this study, we stand alongside Chuck Swindoll on that mountain in Galilee before the risen Lord to better understand and renew our commitment to Jesus' mandate. Every nation. Every tribe. Every speaker of every language.

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Committed to Excellence in Communicating Biblical Truth and Its Application

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES STUDY

Our Commitment to Christ's Commission

Matthew 28:16–20

PREPARE YOUR HEART

Before we study Jesus' charge, consider how you have engaged in the Great Commission, and record a prayer below asking the Father to increase your understanding of it. Request the Spirit's aid in this study—for the strength and clarity to do what God has uniquely called you to do in this work.

YOUR TURN IN THE SCRIPTURES

In each of these *Searching the Scriptures* studies, we use the same Bible study method Chuck uses and has used for more than fifty years during his Bible-teaching ministry. This process equips us to uncover spiritual gems and live lives of godliness.

> *"Physical training is good, but training for godliness is much better, promising benefits in this life and in the life to come."* (1 Timothy 4:8)

Observation: Jesus' Simple and Clear Message

Observation is our first step in getting to know the Bible. During observation, we examine:

1) The who, what, where, when, why, and how

2) What you can see, touch, taste, hear, and smell

3) The logical connections, flow of thoughts, and range of subjects

4) What's repeated, emphasized, related, alike, and unalike

On observation, Chuck writes:

> Through observation, we discover what the Bible says. This part of the process is absolutely foundational. I go through this process every time I prepare any message, lesson, or sermon. Yes . . . *every* time. One hundred percent of the time, I start right there. My goal is to discover what is written in the verses I'm studying.[1]

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Observe *Matthew 28:16–20* and write your notes below.

What three requirements accompany Jesus' command to make disciples?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

What concept did Jesus repeat four times in this passage?

Let's recap Jesus' mandate to His followers. First, *He talked to very ordinary people who knew Him personally.* Jesus didn't entrust the treasure of His message to an elite class of super-smarts. His followers were common folk like us without any special talents, but they had a unique and essential qualification: they knew Jesus.

Second, *Jesus presented the game plan clearly and simply.* The command was to the point: make disciples. And the strategy was basic: teach what Jesus taught and baptize converts. That's a plan anyone can follow!

> *Tucked away at the very end of Matthew's gospel is the commission in few words. It's become so familiar that our lips move when someone reads the Great Commission back to us. We know it by heart, but we're never commanded just to know it. We won't be held accountable for repeating it from memory when we get to heaven. Responsibility lies in the doing of it. And until you come up with a better plan, which will trump this one, I suggest we stay with this one.* —Chuck Swindoll

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Interpretation: Intense about the Message, Not the Method

Now let's enter the next phase of Bible study: interpretation. When we interpret our passage, we study:

1) The author's language and literary genre

2) The author's culture

3) The historical events

4) The biblical context

5) The author's beliefs about God and life

On interpretation, Chuck gives us the following encouragement:

> As you dig in and discover biblical truths on your own, you will realize that interpretation is both a science and an art. It's a science because it's guided by rules that form a system. When you know and follow those rules, you'll begin to interpret Scripture accurately. You'll guard against error, and you'll gain discernment. You'll be able to spot false messages, whether written or spoken. You'll become more stable in your faith; you'll be able to stand on your own as you master the science of interpretation.[2]

Using your Bible study tools, research and explain the meaning of the following statements from the Great Commission and their significance for us today. For an online resource, consult *Constable's Notes* at netbible.org.

I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth.

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Make disciples of all the nations.

Baptize these new disciples in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you.

I am with you always, even to the end of the age.

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Not only did Jesus talk to ordinary people and issue a simple game plan, Jesus was *intense about the message but not the method*. He issued the "what" but wasn't specific about the "how." To make disciples, do we hold classes, facilitate mentoring groups, use computer technology? Training and baptizing comprise the plan, but the methods are many!

> *Jesus gave His simple and clear game plan to very ordinary people who knew Him personally. Remember, the plan is a very simple one. There won't be some heavenly breakthrough where ten million angels suddenly blow trumpets and announce to the universe that Jesus is the Savior of the world. There's no magic kit that Jesus hands out saying, "Do that. Impress people." There's no powerful wand to wave over a group. There's one life touching another life and winning for Christ that soul, who in turn touches others.* —Chuck Swindoll

Correlation: On a Mountain, In a Room

During correlation, we compare:

1) Our passage's history with biblical texts addressing the same event

2) Our passage's theology with biblical texts addressing the same truths

3) Our passage's application with biblical texts addressing the same principles

On the importance of correlation, Chuck shares:

> When we carefully compare one Scripture with others, we are accurately handling the Word of God.[3]

In *Luke 24:44–49*, Luke recorded a different scene from Matthew's gospel, but it functions as Luke's Great Commission passage. He recorded how the resurrected Jesus appeared to His disciples behind closed doors to explain His identity and their new mission. This passage complements Matthew 28:16–20, so it will be our focus for correlation.

What similarities do you see between Luke 24:44–49 and Matthew 28:16–20?

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Which of Luke's emphases are less emphasized in Matthew?

Application: Committing to the Task

During application, the final step of our Bible study, we:

1) Look for ways to pray in light of the what the passage teaches

2) Ask specific questions about thoughts and actions we may need to change

3) Heed our Lord's warnings

4) Obey our Lord's commands

5) Believe our Lord's promises

Chuck urges us to continue our Bible study through to the very end by applying what we've learned:

> I repeat: the crowning part of your task in searching the Scriptures is to discover the ways the truth applies to your own life and the lives of others.[4]

Our final point of this study is that *Jesus' commission required action*. Jesus didn't commission His followers to do nothing. So, how do we put shoe leather on His commands?

In the first *Searching the Scriptures* study of this series, we considered ways in which we could get involved, or more involved, in Jesus' Great Commission. For now, consider ways you can partner with those living abroad or with those who've dedicated their days to making disciples. Record how you can help them or

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encourage them, and then take time in the next few days to follow through on that plan. Whether it be sending a simple note or twenty bucks, you never know what God might use to strengthen them in their work.

A FINAL PRAYER

Jesus said, "The harvest is great, but the workers are few. So pray to the Lord who is in charge of the harvest; ask him to send more workers into his fields" (Matthew 9:37–38). Do that now. Pray for spiritual fruit to grow in the group your church is seeking to reach. Pray for your continued commitment to the task and for more workers who are willing to go.

ENDNOTES

1. Charles R. Swindoll, *Searching the Scriptures: Find the Nourishment Your Soul Needs* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2016), 80.
2. Swindoll, *Searching the Scriptures*, 110.
3. Swindoll, *Searching the Scriptures*, 143.
4. Swindoll, *Searching the Scriptures*, 160.

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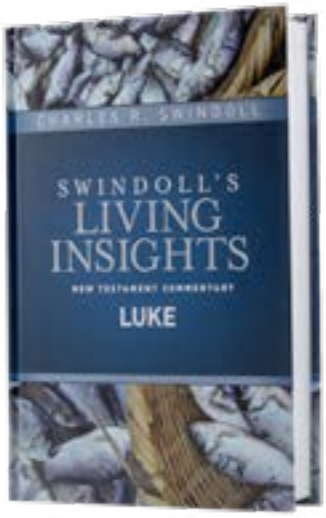
Tools for Digging Deeper

Mission Possible: Christ's Great Commission
by Charles R. Swindoll
CD series

The Great Commission: A *Vision 195* Series
by Charles R. Swindoll
CD series



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For the 2019 broadcast, this *Searching the Scriptures* study was developed by Aaron Massey in collaboration with Bryce Klabunde, executive vice president of Pastoral Ministries, based upon the original outlines, charts, and transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll's messages.

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