

S T U D Y   G U I D E



*the*

GREAT

COMMISSION

BURK PARSONS

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# The Great Commission

Burk Parsons



LIGONIER MINISTRIES

*Renew your Mind.*

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421 Ligonier Court, Sanford, FL 32771

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# Introduction

From Genesis to Revelation, the mission of God is focused on God saving a people for Himself from every tribe, tongue, and nation. Our Lord Jesus Christ gave His people the Great Commission to make disciples of all nations. This is a significant task, yet it is one that the Holy Spirit enables His church to accomplish as we rest in the authority of Christ over all things. In this series, Dr. Burk Parsons walks us through every phrase of the Great Commission, carefully examining how Christ calls us to fulfill the Great Commission by God's sovereign power, according to His appointed means, and for His glory alone.

This study guide is a companion to the video teaching series. Whether you are using the DVDs, streaming the videos on Ligonier.org, or going through the course in Ligonier Connect, this resource is designed to help you make the most of the learning experience. For each message in the series, there is a corresponding lesson in this guide. Here is what you will find in each lesson:

INTRODUCTION	<p>The introduction is a brief paragraph that summarizes the content covered in the lecture and considered in the study guide lesson.</p> <p><b>How to use:</b> Use the introduction to each lesson to get a sense of the big picture before watching the video. Refer to these statements as you work through the study guide to remind yourself of what have already covered and where you are headed.</p>
LEARNING GOALS	<p>The learning goals are the knowledge and skills with which the study guide lesson will endeavor to equip you as you work through the lecture content.</p> <p><b>How to use:</b> Familiarize yourself with the goals of each lesson before engaging with its contents. Keeping the overall purpose in mind as you watch each video and reflect on or discuss the questions will help you get the most out of each lesson.</p>

KEY IDEAS	<p>The key ideas are the major points or takeaways from the lecture.</p> <p><b>How to use:</b> Use these ideas to prepare yourself for each lesson and to review previous lessons. They describe specifically the knowledge each lecture is communicating.</p>
REFLECTION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS	<p>The questions are the guided reflection and discussion component of the lesson that are intended to help you prepare for, process, and organize what you are learning.</p> <p><b>How to use:</b> Reflect on individually or discuss in a group the questions in the order in which they appear in the lesson. The  icon indicates where to play and to pause the video for questions that address specific segments of the lecture.</p>
PRAYER	<p>The prayer section offers suggestions for how to close the lesson in prayer with respect to what was taught in the lecture.</p> <p><b>How to use:</b> Consider using each lesson's prayer section as a guide to personal or group prayer. These sections follow the ACTS prayer model, about which you can learn more in R.C. Sproul's Crucial Questions booklet <i>Does Prayer Change Things?</i> This helpful guide is available as a free e-book at <a href="http://Ligonier.org">Ligonier.org</a>.</p>
REVIEW QUIZ	<p>The review quiz is a set of six multiple-choice questions that appears at the end of each lesson.</p> <p><b>How to use:</b> Use each quiz to check your comprehension and memory of the major points covered in each lecture. It will be most beneficial to your learning if you take a lesson's quiz either sometime between lessons or just before you begin the next lesson in the study guide.</p>
ANSWER KEY	<p>The answer key provides explanations for the reflection and discussion questions and answers to the multiple-choice questions in the review quiz.</p> <p><b>How to use:</b> Use the answer key to check your own answers or when you do not know the answer. Note: Do not give in too quickly; struggling for a few moments to recall an answer reinforces it in your mind.</p>

# They Worshiped Him

## INTRODUCTION

The Great Commission is given in the context of worship. When Jesus' followers encountered Him after the resurrection, they fell down and worshiped Him, and He commissioned them to fulfill His mission in making disciples and taking the gospel to the ends of the earth. In this lesson, Dr. Parsons introduces the Great Commission by looking at the reason why God created us: that He might be worshiped.

## LEARNING GOALS

When you have finished this lesson, you should be able to:

- Describe the overall setting of the Great Commission in the book of Matthew
- Identify the central theme of worship within the context of the Great Commission

## KEY IDEAS

- The Great Commission is one of the most foundational commands in all of Scripture.
- Worship is the fulfillment of the mission of God, because God created us for worship.
- The Great Commission is given within the context of worship: the disciples of Jesus worshiped at His feet and were sent so that others might worship Him.

## REFLECTION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

🕒 Before the Video

*What Do You Think?*

- Why do we exist? Why did God choose to create us?

- What feelings do you have when confronted with the overall scope and weightiness of the Great Commission? Is obedience to the Great Commission required of some Christians only or is it required of all Christians? Why?

### *Scripture Reading*

*All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 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 all that I have commanded you. And I am with you always, to the end of the age.*

—Matthew 28:18b–20

- What are the different commands found within the Great Commission?

### 🕒 During the Video

▶ *Play the video; pause at 7:12.*

### *Setting the Scene*

- What is the overall setting of the Great Commission? Consider not only the location but also the timeline in the life of Christ and to whom it was given.
- What type of events typically occur on mountains throughout the Bible and particularly in the gospel of Matthew? What are some examples of these types of events?

▶ *Play the video; pause at 14:34.*

### *The Purpose of Life*

- What did the disciples do when they saw Jesus before receiving the Great Commission?
- Why did God create us? Did He need to create us? Why or why not?
- How does God's reason for creating us inform how we are to relate to creation?

### 🕒 After the Video

- The Bible does not use the name “the Great Commission” in reference to the commands that Jesus gave to His disciples in Matthew 28. Why are these commands traditionally referred to as “the Great Commission”? In what way might the name “the Great Commission” be misleading?

If you are in a group, have the members discuss how the Great Commission makes them feel. Does it make them feel passionate about the spread of the gospel? Or does it make them feel guilt and shame? Why?

- What does the reaction of the disciples upon seeing Jesus after His resurrection tell us about what the disciples thought of themselves and what they thought of Jesus?

If you are in a group, have the members name various ways in which we can worship God. Are any of these ways more significant than others?

- Some of the disciples experienced an internal conflict and doubted when they saw Jesus after His resurrection. How does the fact that this is recorded in the New Testament provide an argument for the infallibility of the Bible?

If you are in a group, have each member say whether they consider the doubt of the disciples to be an encouragement or discouragement and explain why. In addition, have each member identify one or two heroes of the faith who also serve as an argument for the veracity of the Bible.

## PRAYER

- Praise God for creating us to find our purpose in worship.
- Confess the areas where you are prone to worship creation rather than the Creator.
- Thank God for making you a part of His mission to make worshipers of all people.
- Ask God to equip and empower you as an instrument in fulfilling the Great Commission.

## REVIEW QUIZ

1. What region did Jesus tell the women to send the disciples to after His resurrection?
  - a. Tyre
  - b. Judea
  - c. Galilee
  - d. Samaria
2. What geographical feature is the locale for many of the redemptive-historical events in the book of Matthew?
  - a. Rivers
  - b. Deserts
  - c. Valleys
  - d. Mountains
3. What word best describes what the Great Commission ought to be?
  - a. Easy
  - b. Difficult
  - c. Ordinary
  - d. Extraordinary

4. Of the following disciples, who is the most likely to have doubted when seeing Jesus?
  - a. John
  - b. Judas
  - c. Andrew
  - d. Matthew
5. Obedience to the Great Commission will involve sacrifice to one degree or another.
  - a. True
  - b. False
6. What is another nuance of the verb describing the disciples' doubt when they saw Jesus?
  - a. Dread
  - b. Disbelief
  - c. Hesitation
  - d. Confusion

# Answer Key—They Worshiped Him

## REFLECTION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

### 🕒 Before the Video

#### *What Do You Think?*

*These are personal questions. The answers should be based on your own knowledge and experience.*

#### *Scripture Reading*

- What are the different commands found within the Great Commission?

*Four distinct commands are found within the Great Commission. The first two commands are primary commands. We are commanded to “go” and “make disciples.” The second two commands describe the nature of how disciples are to be made, by “baptizing them” and by “teaching them to observe” everything that Jesus has commanded us.*

### 🕒 During the Video

#### *Setting the Scene*

- What is the overall setting of the Great Commission? Consider not only the location but also the timeline in the life of Christ and to whom it was given.

*Jesus gave the Great Commission to the eleven disciples on a mountain in Galilee after his resurrection. The details of this scene can be found in Matthew 28:16, as well as in Matthew 28:7–10, as referenced by Dr. Parsons.*

- What type of events typically occur on mountains throughout the Bible and particularly in the gospel of Matthew? What are some examples of these types of events?

*Mountains are often the scene of significant redemptive-historical events throughout the Bible and in the gospel of Matthew. Mountains are often the places where God discloses Himself, revealing who He is and His will for His people. In the Old Testament and in Matthew, some examples of redemptive-historical events that take place on mountains include the revelation of the law on Mount Sinai, the Sermon on the Mount, and the transfiguration.*

#### *The Purpose of Life*

- What did the disciples do when they saw Jesus before receiving the Great Commission?

*Quite simply, the disciples worshiped Him. We do not know all the details of how this looked but it is likely that the disciples were on their knees or prostrate before*

*Him in reverence and awe. Strikingly, we are also told that, even in the midst of such worship, some of the disciples doubted (Matt. 28:17).*

- Why did God create us? Did He need to create us? Why or why not?

*God created us for worship. The Westminster Shorter Catechism states that “man’s chief end is to glorify God and enjoy him forever.” We glorify God by worshipping Him, and thus we fulfill the purpose for which we were created. God did not need to create us, because He is perfect and complete in all His attributes and eternal and self-sufficient. The encouraging thing is that He wanted to create us, that we might be His people in worship.*

- How does God’s reason for creating us inform how we are to relate to creation?

*God created us to worship Him, which informs us of how we are to relate to creation as something that is fundamentally not to be worshiped. We worship the Creator and not the creation. This entails being good stewards of God’s creation for the sake of His mission, that the gospel would reach to the ends of the earth and to future generations.*

#### 🕒 After the Video

- The Bible does not use the name “the Great Commission” in reference to the commands that Jesus gave to His disciples in Matthew 28. Why are these commands traditionally referred to as “the Great Commission”? In what way might the name “the Great Commission” be misleading?

*While the Bible does not use the name, the commands that Jesus gave to His disciples in Matthew 28 have traditionally been called “the Great Commission.” This name is appropriate when we consider the significance, scope, and weightiness of what the Great Commission calls us to do. Nonetheless, this name may be misleading if we fail to recognize that the Great Commission is an ordinary calling for every Christian. Obedience to it ought to be the general practice of all Christians.*

- What does the reaction of the disciples upon seeing Jesus after His resurrection tell us about what the disciples thought of themselves and what they thought of Jesus?

*When the disciples saw Jesus Christ after His resurrection, they worshiped Him. This tells us that the disciples understood that they were encountering nothing short of the Lord God Almighty, in all His holiness. The disciples reacted with fear and trembling, recognizing their unholiness and need for a righteous and holy God and Savior. Reactions like this are typical throughout the Bible for all those who encounter God in reverence.*

- Some of the disciples experienced an internal conflict and doubted when they saw Jesus after His resurrection. How does the fact that this is recorded in the New Testament provide an argument for the infallibility of the Bible?

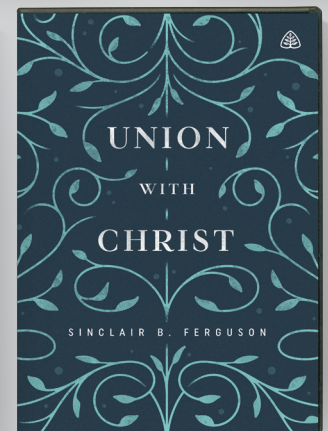
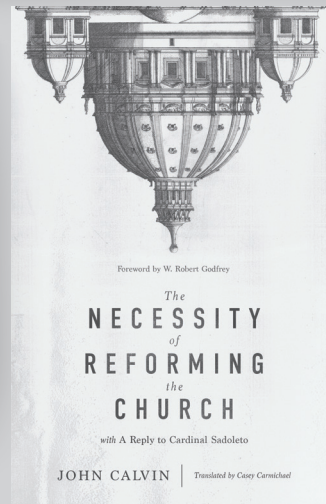
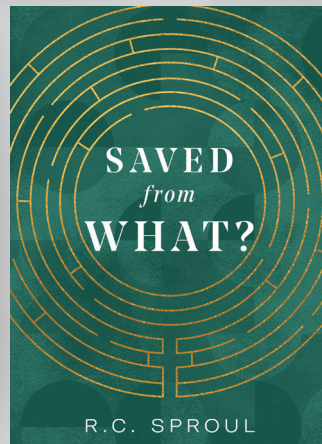
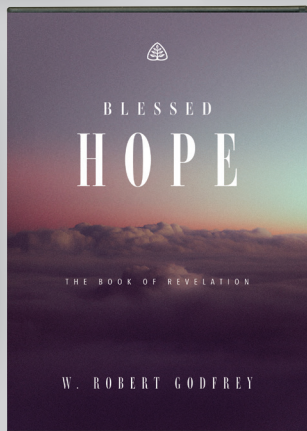
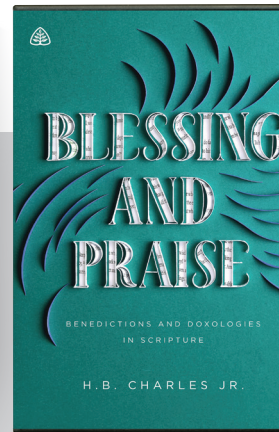
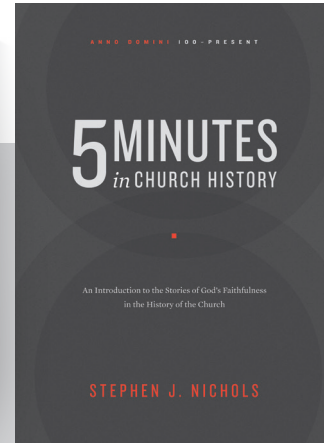
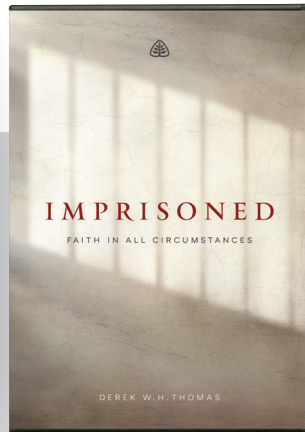
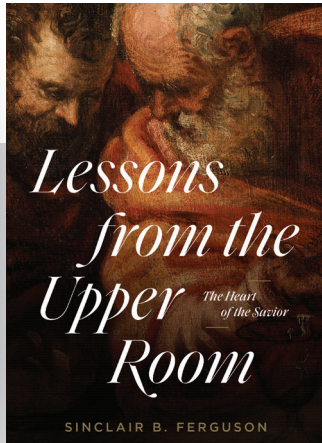
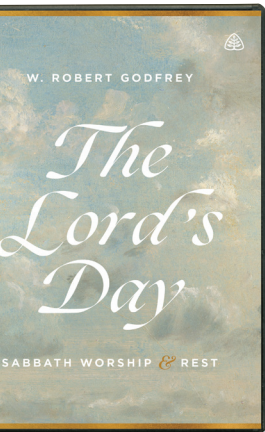
*The fact that the shortcomings of the disciples are recorded in the Bible provides a*

*strong argument for the infallibility of the Bible, because it shows that the record of the life of Jesus Christ isn't a fabrication. As a piece of historically accurate literature, the Bible even describes the failures and weaknesses of the closest followers of Jesus Christ.*

## REVIEW QUIZ

1. **C.**  
*In Matthew 28:16, we see that the disciples went to Galilee to meet Jesus, who had told the women who first witnessed the resurrection to send His disciples there in Matthew 28:10.*
2. **D.**  
*Mountains are important redemptive-historical locales throughout the Bible and in the gospel of Matthew. In the gospel of Matthew, such redemptive-historical events include the Sermon on the Mount, the transfiguration, and the Great Commission.*
3. **C.**  
*While traditionally called “the Great Commission” because of its worldwide scope, the word “ordinary” best describes what the Great Commission ought to be. Christ has called us to ordinary obedience in the Great Commission, and it should be the general practice of every Christian and every church in fulfilling the mission of God.*
4. **D.**  
*Dr. Parsons suggested a few possibilities to answer this question: possibly Thomas, who we know doubted Jesus, or possibly Peter, who we know denied Jesus. Dr. Parsons also conjectured that Matthew was likely to have doubted, being the author of this book of the Bible and knowing his own heart.*
5. **A.**  
*Obedience to the Great Commission will certainly involve sacrifice over comfort, as we strive to be obedient by giving up our time, treasures, and talents for the sake of God's mission to the nations.*
6. **C.**  
*The Greek word used for the internal conflict of the disciples when first seeing the resurrected Christ is translated as “doubted” in the English Standard Version. Also, within the semantic range of this word is the idea of hesitation. Perhaps the disciples hesitated in acknowledging and recognizing Jesus in His resurrected body.*

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