

Week 1: Introduction and “Fishless Fishers”

Welcome, Pray, & Icebreaker

- Share your name, your pet’s name or why you do not have pets, and what interests you about this group or subject of sharing the gospel.

“Sharing the Gospel” Objectives

- To understand the Great Commission, as well as our need to obey God’s call to go
- To understand the basics of the gospel message
- To become familiar with various gospel sharing strategies
- To gain experience sharing the gospel alongside other believers
- To learn to respond to objections to the gospel with wisdom and grace
- To put together an intentional strategy to reach someone with the gospel and begin “Going” to them

Schedule

Date	Group Topic
Week 1 (Aug. 26th)	Class Introduction and “Fishless Fishers”
Week 2 (Sept. 2nd)	The Commander
Week 3 (Sept. 9th)	The Command
Week 4 (Sept. 16th)	The Extent
Week 5 (Sept. 23rd)	Sharing the Gospel – Gospel Basics
Week 6 (Sept. 30th)	Sharing the Gospel – Personal Testimony
Week 7 (Oct. 7th)	Sharing the Gospel – Creation, Fall, Cross, Believe
Week 8 (Oct. 14th)	Sharing the Gospel – 3 Circles
Week 9 (Oct. 21st)	Teaching Others to Follow
Week 10 (Oct. 28th)	God With Us
Week 11 (Nov. 4th)	Being Intentional
Week 12 (Nov. 11th)	Dealing With Objections: Does God Even Exist
Week 13 (Nov. 18th)	Dealing With Objections: Is Jesus the Only Way?
Week 14 (Dec. 2nd)	Dealing With Objections: Can I Trust the Bible?
Week 15 (Dec. 9th)	Dealing With Objections: The Problem of Evil
Week 16 (Dec. 16th)	Now Go...

Note: In the event that the group does not meet we will pick up where we left off instead of skipping a week of content. The one exception is that we will finish on Dec. 16th with the “Now Go” topic regardless of previous cancellations.

The Great Commission

“And Jesus came and said to them, ‘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 behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.’” -Matthew 28:18-20

We are going to take the next several weeks and talk about the various parts of this passage of Scripture, but for today we want to make some general observations:

1. What stands out to you as you read Jesus’ command here in Matthew 28?

2. What parts of this passage have been the easiest for you to believe/obey over the course of your Christian life?

3. What parts of this passage have been the hardest for you to believe/obey?

Jesus intended for his disciples to center their life around this commandment. They were to dedicate their lives to inviting others to believe the gospel (“baptizing them”) and helping believers, both young and old, follow Jesus the rest of their lives (“teaching them”).

Group Check-in: How would you say you are currently doing in regards to centering your life around these two purposes?

“PARABLE OF THE FISHLESS FISHERMEN” BY: JOHN M. DRESCHER

Then He said to them, “Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.” –Matthew 4:19

Now it came to pass that a group existed who called themselves fishermen. And lo, there were many fish in the waters all around. In fact, the whole area was surrounded by streams and lakes filled with fish. And the fish were hungry.

Year after year these who called themselves fishermen met in meetings and talked about their call to fish, the abundance of fish, and how they might go about fishing.

Continually they searched for new and better definitions of fishing. They sponsored costly nationwide and worldwide congresses to discuss fishing and to promote fishing and hear about all the ways of fishing.

These fishermen built large, beautiful buildings called "Fishing Headquarters." The plea was that everyone should be a fisherman and every fisherman should fish. One thing they didn't do, however; they didn't fish.

They organized a board to send out fishermen to where there were many fish. The board was formed by those who had the great vision and courage to speak about fishing, to define fishing, and to promote the idea of fishing in far-away streams and lakes where many other fish of different colors lived.

Also the board hired staffs and appointed committees and held many meetings to define fishing, to defend fishing, and to decide what new streams should be thought about. But the staff and committee members did not fish.

Expensive training centers were built to teach fishermen how to fish. Those who taught had doctorates in Fishology, but the teachers did not fish. They only taught fishing. Year after year, graduates were sent to do full-time fishing, some to distant waters filled with fish.

Further, the fishermen built large printing houses to publish fishing guides. A speaker's bureau was also provided to schedule special speakers on the subject of fishing.

Many who felt the call to be fishermen responded, and were sent to fish. But like the fishermen back home, they never fished.

Some also said they wanted to be part of the fishing party, but they felt called to furnish fishing equipment. Others felt their job was to relate to the fish in a good way so the fish would know the difference between good and bad fishermen.

After one stirring meeting on "The Necessity for Fishing," a young fellow left the meeting and went fishing. The next day he reported he had caught two outstanding fish. He was honored for his excellent catch and scheduled to visit all the big meetings possible to tell how he did it.

So he quit his fishing in order to have time to tell about the experience to the other fishermen. He was also placed on the Fishermen's General Board as a person having considerable experience.

Now it's true that many of the fishermen sacrificed and put up with all kinds of difficulties. Some lived near the water and bore the smell of dead fish every day. They received the ridicule of some who made fun of their fishermen's clubs and the fact that they claimed to be fishermen yet never fished.

They wondered about those who felt it was of little use to attend the weekly meetings to talk about fishing. After all, were they not following the Master who said, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men?"

Imagine how hurt some were when one day a person suggested that those who didn't catch fish were really not fishermen, no matter how much they claimed to be. Yet it did sound correct. Is a person a fisherman if year after year he never catches a fish?

4. What good, Christian activity has often caused you to be a "fishless fisherman"?

Similar to this parable, Jesus has told us that "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few" (Matthew 9:37). In other words, there are many fish waiting to be caught, but few who are willing or able to go fish.

Group Check-in: What courageous step do you believe God is calling you to take to either become a fisher of men, or to help others in our church become fishers of men?

Praying This Week

- Thank God for the opportunity we have to serve him through the Great Commission
- Ask God to forgive us for becoming fishless fisherman, and receive His grace
- Invite the Spirit to change our hearts to become and equip others to be fishers of men