

# Application

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See if you can see how I misquote the Great Commission:

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

Did you catch it?

Let me make it easier on you. Here is the real Great Commission. (I put it in bold so the line breaks don't line up; I don't want to make this too easy!)

**Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 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, 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]**

Did you find it? I left out the words "to obey." Jesus commanded us to make disciples, "teaching them to obey." Not "teaching everything I have commanded you." Teaching to obey. The difference is crucial.

Teaching to make disciples is all about application. It is all about making doers of the Word and not just hearers only. It is not just telling and then praying that, "God would bless the application of this teaching to your hearts." Teaching—disciplemaking teaching—is all about teaching for application.

Teaching is not vague discussions about God and politics, God and the media, God and who knows what. Teaching is not coming to understand the Christian perspective on various political and social issues. Teaching is about life change. It is about making disciples. It is about teaching them to obey.

If you would teach effectively, imagine every student has a sign on his head that reads, "What do you want me to do about this come Monday morning?" I actually asked this in my own class a couple of years back. I sensed the conversation was drifting badly off course and asked the man who was then my Sunday School teacher, "Ty, we are going to be walking out of here in about five minutes. What do you want to do about what we heard today." It got to be the standard line in our class for months to come. We would get a bit off course and Ty would say, "Well, we better not chase that rabbit too far; I know what Josh is thinking-What do you want us to do about what we hear today come Monday morning?"

Your students may not be as bold (or rude) as me, but you better be sure they are all asking: What do you want me to do about what I heard today?

Here is a good question: how do you do this? How do you teach for application. Four steps:

- Show the why
- Show the how
- Show the cost/ benefit
- Ask for the order

### **1. Show the why**

People will figure out the how if the why is strong enough. People will do anything if they have a strong enough why. Persuade them there are compelling reasons to do or not do to this. Ask questions like:

1. Why is it important that we memorize scripture?
2. Why is it important that we not exasperate our children?
3. Why is important that husbands treasure their wives?
4. Why is it important that wives respect their husbands?

### **2. Show the how**

Here is where you get really practical:

1. How can an undisciplined person come to have a quiet time every day?
2. How can a person who is deep in debt find their way out?
3. How can we discover God's calling for our lives?
4. What steps could we take to reduce worry by 50% in our lives this week?

### **3. Show the cost / benefit**

In the long run, people will do--and only do--what they believe to be in their best interest. Good news is, it is always in our best interest to live the Christian life. Always. In the long run, always. The Bible says His commands are not burdensome. The Bible teaches He is a Rewarder of those who seek Him. We cannot come near to Him except that we believe He is the kind of God who rewards. This is the heart of the human question: is God good? Can He be trusted? If we throw our lives into His arms will be bless us?

In order to embrace the idea that God is good and is a Rewarder, we need to embrace this around everything he asks us to do. So, once we figure out what we want people to do, we need to ask these two questions. You can ask these questions pretty much every week:

1. What is the benefit for following God in this area?
2. What will it cost us if we don't follow God in this area?

Here are a few specific examples:

1. What are the benefits of starting the day with the Bible on our laps?
2. What does not tithing cost us?
3. What does it cost us if we don't forgive?
4. What are the benefits of thanking God in all things?

#### **4. Ask for the order**

Ask them: what do you want to do about what you heard today? Teachers are often too timid. We talk about discipleship. We teach what it means to follow God. We don't ask for the order. We don't say, "What do you want to do about what you heard today?"

We can do this on one of two ways, depending on the topic:

1. Baby steps
2. The big ask

Depending on the topic, you may choose to use one approach or the other. At a minimum we want to ask for a baby step. Sometimes, we need to make the Big Ask. We need to ask for the big order. Teach like Jesus; He did it all the time.

So: here is your question: how do you want to teach differently based on this article. Post your answers at [www.sundayschool.ning.com](http://www.sundayschool.ning.com)