

THE GREAT COMMISSION



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The Great Commission

The author is convinced that as God's children we must have heard about the Great Commission. Before the Lord Jesus ascended into heaven, He conveyed a final message which was very important for all humanity. That message was the Great Commission from our Lord Jesus to the believers. This Great Commission is recorded in the Bible, among others in:

Matthew 28:19,20 "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

The Great Commission clearly assigned us to go to spread the Gospel, the Good News of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the assignment or mission is reconfirmed in Ephesians 6:15, "*And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace.*" (KJV)

Or *“And with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace.”* (NIV)

(We encourage you to read **"The Victorious People"**).

As God's people, we certainly want to carry out this Great Commission of our Lord Jesus. So how would we take into consideration the significance of this Great Commission, then act upon it, exerting every effort to spread the Gospel to people around us?

Be the Salt And the Light

Jesus claimed His disciples to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world, Matthew 5:13, *“Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. 14 Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.”*

Salt is to give taste, which means that as disciples of Christ, we should be able to give some taste or sense of life in Christ to our environment, and even to the world. All of our behavior, our thinking, or our lifestyle

should be able to influence people around us, in our environment. We should give some taste or sense of the Gospel to our families, our environment, so that they could taste or experience the blessings and the love of Christ in their lives.

To be the light of the world means that our lives should reflect Christ, because Christ is the light of the world, John 9:5, *"As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world."*

A life that reflects Christ means that our lives should be like Christ's, Romans 8:29, *"For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren."*

When we become the light of the world, people will see the image of Christ in our lives, and living as the light of the world we would illuminate our environment, provide enlightenment or insights about the eternal salvation and the truth.

Exemplary

When we evangelize, we do not do it just verbally or only by our words, but also by our deeds, since those we evangelize do not only hear but also see. In short, we do not just talk, but become an example too for them as the Lord Jesus had done, according to John 13:15, *"For I have given you **an example**, that ye should do as I have done to you."*

The same lifestyle is shown by the Apostle Paul, written in 2 Thessalonians 3:9,

*"Not because we have not power, but to make ourselves **an ensample** unto you to follow us."* (KJV)

Or *"We did this, not because we do not have the right to such help, but in order to make ourselves **a model** for you to follow."* (NIV)

The Apostle Paul also gave the same advice to Titus, for example in Titus 2:7, *"In all things shewing thyself **a pattern** of good works: in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity."*

Similarly to Timothy, in 1 Timothy 4:12, *"Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou **an example** of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity."* (KJV)

Or “Don’t let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set **an example** for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity.” (NIV)

Then in Titus 2:1-10 too, which is expressed even more clearly how people should behave.

Titus 2:1 But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine:

2:2 That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience.

2:3 The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things;

2:4 That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children,

2:5 To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.

2:6 Young men likewise exhort to be sober minded.

2:7 In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity,

2:8 Sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you.

2:9 Exhort servants to be obedient unto their own masters, and to please them well in all things; not answering again,

2:10 Not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.

Furthermore, although we evangelize, we ourselves are still learners, which means that we continually have to learn more to be like Christ. So it is a lifelong learning process. Therefore we should not wait until we are perfect before we evangelize, because we can never be perfect. Indeed evangelizing would spur us to become better disciples of Christ.

Jerusalem - Our Family

Then when we read Acts 1:8, regarding the Great Commission, it is said, *"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth ."*

The phrase *"in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth"* could perhaps be considered as one of our guidance today for evangelism. Although we do not live in the vicinity of Jerusalem, we can apply the principle of this phrase symbolically, where Jerusalem symbolizes our family, children, wife, and husband.

To make every endeavor for all members of our family to become God's people is the ministry God assigned us, written in Deuteronomy 6:

5 And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.

6 And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart:

7 And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.

8 And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes,

9 And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.

The verses above clearly state that we have to teach the Word of God repeatedly to our children and become doers of the God's Word in our lives.

What is God's purpose here?

Malachi 2:15 explains that God requires of a family a divine offspring, children of God.

“And did not he make one? Yet had he the residue of the spirit. And wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed. Therefore take heed

to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth.” (KJV)

Or *”Has not the LORD made them one? In flesh and spirit they are his. And why one? Because he was seeking godly offspring. So guard yourself in your spirit, and do not break faith with the wife of your youth.” (NIV)*

In fact, in Malachi 2:10-16 the LORD God emphasized that besides a divine offspring He demanded loyalty between the married couple, between husband and wife.

The LORD God very seriously desires that every descendant of God's children becomes a divine offspring. Once God even planned to kill Moses because Moses had neglected to circumcise his son, which means that Moses neglected to bring his child to become God's child and God's people.

Exodus 4:24 And it came to pass by the way in the inn, that the LORD met him, and sought to kill him.

From the above verse, as God sought to kill Moses, we realize that the task to make each one of our children become a divine child or God's child is a serious matter demanded by God. Please read more about this in the book

"Our Major Ministry" and "A People Prepared for the Lord".

However, some of God's children prefer to evangelize people outside their family circle rather than members of their own family. Why? Because they meet with difficulties in evangelizing members of their family. In fact, quite many complained that when they told about the gospel, their family members tended to be stubborn, unyielding, and there were some other reasons. If we consider deeply, one of the reasons is because we ourselves are not yet doers of the Word, thence when we tell the gospel, arguments and resistance arise in the hearts of the people we evangelize.

Our family members have been living with us so that they know how we live our lives. Consequently when we evangelize them they will *grumble* or say in their hearts, *"Ah, that is nice speech, but his/her behavior does not reflect it."*

Therefore we should be doers of the Word, be the salt of the earth and the light of the world, as exemplified in Peter 3:1-2, *"Likewise,*

ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives. While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear.” (KJV)

Or *“Wives, in the same way be submissive to your husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives, when they see the purity and reverence of your lives.” (NIV)*

The verse above explains that a wife could win her husband even without words, only through her pure and pious lifestyle, and this is the expression of doing the Word.

Thus it is clear the Great Commission demands that we should be doers of the Word, the salt of the earth and the light of the world, so that we would be able to make disciples of Christ of all nations, which can be started with our own family members.

Judea - Our Big Family

When all members of our family have become disciples of Christ: husband, wife and children, we can expand our evangelism **"throughout Judea"**. What is Judea? Judea is

the province where Jerusalem is located. So if Jerusalem is to be the symbol for our family, then Judea symbolizes our extended family: our parents, brothers and sisters, relatives, even our in-laws.

It is not easy to evangelize our big family. Yet if we have become doers of the Word, this would be the root-stock or provision for us to make our big family disciples of Christ.

Further in 1 John 3:17 we read, *"But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?"*

This verse tells us that we must help our brothers or fellowmen who are in need. From the author's observations and experiences within his big family, he noticed that one of the obstacles which stagnated the evangelism among them was because we did not want to help our relatives who were in difficulties. Oftentimes we were still reluctant to spend our money, our time, our energy to help them. We might love God and our brothers/fellowmen,

but we love mammon and our possessions more. (We recommend you to read "**Jesus versus Mammon**"). The author witnessed that when God's children in his big family were willing to help other members of the family by offering their time, money, resources and efforts, then evangelism went smoothly. Even without too many verbal explanations they who did not believe could be won for Christ. When we help our relatives, to the extent that they can solve their problems, those family members who still do not believe yet in the Lord Jesus Christ would be more open-hearted, because they can see and feel God's love through us, His children.

Matthew 5:16 "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

Samaria - Our Neighbor

Then **Samaria**, the neighboring province next to Judea. This symbolizes our neighbor(s). Our neighbors are not merely neighbors in the actual sense, but can also be our business partners, our friends and even our

acquaintances. So that is our picture of Samaria. There is a very clear example in the Bible of how we can evangelize, or on what basic reason do we evangelize our neighbors or our business associates. This happened when the Lord Jesus was on the way back from Judea to Galilee, passing through Samaria. He stopped by a well and sat down, then asked for some water from a Samaritan woman.

John 4:7 "There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water. Jesus said unto her, Give me to drink."

4:9 "Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria?" (For the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans).

In the end we know that not only the Samaritan woman was saved, but the entire population living in that town too. How could it be like that? Because Jesus **did not discriminate against anyone**, whether the person is a Jew, a Samaritan, or any other individual considered to be of low standing. Likewise, when we treat everyone as God's glorious creation and make no distinction among people, whether they are poor or rich,

of good position or not, from any race, then we would be able to evangelize them.

The same thing happened to Peter. Peter began to reach out to other nations outside the Jewish people when he realized that God did not discriminate against any man.

*Acts 10:34 "Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that **God is no respecter of persons.**"*

35 "But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him." (KJV)

Or *34 "Then Peter began to speak: 'I now realize how true it is that **God does not show favoritism.**'"*

35 "But accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right." (NIV).

To the Ends of the Earth

Furthermore, we can expand our evangelism **"to the ends of the earth"** or **"unto the uttermost part of the earth"**. If we can evangelize our own family by being doers of the Word, and can evangelize our big family without being attached and tied to our wealth or properties, which means that we are willing to help others and consider every man equal in

the eyes of God, equally valuable, hence we can also evangelize a wider environment. We can make disciples of Christ of all nations.

Conclusion

Then the author wants to close this writing with a personal experience. In the past I (the author), belonged to those who were not very active in the church, because during the year 1980-2000, I focussed more in studying various religions. Thus I turned down many offers to join in Christian ministries or activities. During that period of my study, I believed that the most important ministry was to serve our family. However, oftentimes conflicts arose in my mind whether or not I was too selfish, as I was concerned only with my own family and cared less about others until at some point in the year 2006.

At that time my eldest daughter had completed her study in Australia. She planned to continue her education in China to learn Mandarin, for her fiancé spoke Mandarin daily in his family, while we spoke Indonesian in

our family. If she did not learn Mandarin, she would not be able to communicate well with her husband's family in the future. A few days later, after she arrived in Beijing, I and my wife, with our two other children visited her there in order to see and know for ourselves the condition of the campus, the environment and her colleges. Thus we could understand better when later she would call us up or communicate with other means.

During our stay in Beijing we were assisted by a local guide, Mrs. Ellis, who could speak Indonesian. Since our purpose there was only to see the campus and its environment, we did not have any particular activities. We just walked to the mall, had lunch, dinner and a chat with Mrs. Ellis.

It turned out that Mrs. Ellis was a Christian, but had not gone to church for quite a while, since the church was a bit far, and her son also complained that he was excommunicated after his friends knew that his mother was a Christian. Her husband was a public prosecutor and non-Christian. From our conversations I got to know that Mrs. Ellis'

family was not so harmonious, and she asked a lot of questions about how we bring up our children and edify our family. Therefore I told her more about the experiences of how to rear and edify a family and so on. Relatively I myself did not talk much about the gospel, just told her what we used to do in our family.

Then I remembered the fourth day we were in Beijing, as Mrs. Ellis drove us to the airport. Before parting, she said to me, *"Sir, after all our conversations and as I watch your family, I'm going to attend the church again."*

Until now I still feel the thrill of amazement when I recall this particular event, and the experience affirms me, that it is not always necessary to talk much in evangelizing. Instead, a sincere and harmonious family could also be a means to evangelize. And since then I became more confident of what I have been doing is right, so I keep on making every effort to provide sufficient time to take care of my family, to educate and edify.

Finally, we have to yield the people we have evangelized to the Lord, because only by God's power and grace they could be saved. The best thing we can do is to pray for them, witness to them, and live the Christian life in front of them as an example for them, because it is God who makes them grow, 1 Corinthians 3:6 *"I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase."* (KJV)

Or *"I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow."* (NIV)