

# When Jesus Went to Vegas

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## Overview

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This week we are going to wrap up the message series and talk about the last few words that Jesus left for us while He was in Vegas. The Great Commission is one of those passages that, to many, sounds like a good idea, but we're quick to think that it has no application for Christians today. The reality is that Jesus went to Vegas to bring salvation so that we can experience Him. He also came so that we could, in turn, go back to Vegas ourselves to help others experience Him and His salvation. He didn't come to create a holy huddle; He came to make us holy and equip us to take His message to those who are disconnected from Him and His church. As a group, you'll get to take time to think about how this happens in our lives. We are also going to spend time praying for the strategic missions' partners Mountain Lake has developed. Each of us has a part to play in fulfilling the Great Commission, and this week your group will work together to identify and work toward fulfilling those parts.

## Objectives

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- Evaluate our understanding of the Great Commission for our lives today.
- Pray together for the Great Commission to be fulfilled in the strategic missions' partners around the world.

## Facilitators' Guide

### 1. What is one thing you have learned or taken away from this series?

- As we wrap up the series this week, this is a great time to share about any eye-opening experiences or truths people have experienced over the last four weeks. Do not plan to spend a lot of time on this question. But for those who do share, encourage them to be specific about what they have learned. We call it our "number one take away" within the ministry team. It is the one thing that sticks with you and that you are able to make a practical part of your life.

## 2. Read Matthew 28:19-20. Answer the following questions:

**\*What's your personal reaction to Jesus' commission? Urgency? Inspiration? Excitement? Fear? Mixed Emotions?**

- The thing that is often mistaken about the Great Commission is that it is not just a good idea that Jesus threw out there for us to take or leave. The verses were some of the last words that He left with the disciples before He ascended into Heaven. He left Vegas, his disciples, and this commandment for His followers to live out. And His commission is just as much for me today as it was for those guys thousands of years ago.
- Your group may be all over the page in their reactions to Jesus' commission. Some may be genuinely excited and ready to face the challenge while others may be scared to death about what it means for them personally. As people answer, prompt them to explain their reactions and why they feel the way they do.
- For me, I am a little caught off guard by His words. The reality is that He is telling me to carry on the work that He began in Vegas. This seems like such a daunting task, and it is a little overwhelming and frightening to know it is my purpose on this earth. It is not just about me living my comfortable life and going to church every week; it is about getting out of my comfort zone and investing in the lives of people around me. It is about aligning my life with the mission of His church. It is about rearranging my priorities so that I live for the sake of other people and not just what I can get out of life. That plays out into every area of my life (time, finances, relationships, etc.).

**\*What is the promise in this verse and how does it encourage you?**

- I have a lot of responsibility for how I live my life and the choices I have to make to intentionally live out the Great Commission. But the promise that Jesus is with me gives me courage to know that He is going to make up for what I lack. He didn't just give me a task to complete on my own and send me on my way. He is with me every step of the way!
- Think about the disciples as they heard Jesus' promise. He was not going to be with them physically any more, but He promised to still be with them through a personal relationship in order to give them the words to say and the courage to carry on the work they had begun with Him. I'm sure it was overwhelming for them to say goodbye to their friend and leader, but His promise had to bring a peace to their lives.

**\*The Great Commission is about "going" to people who are disconnected from Christ or the church. On a scale from 1 - 10 (1 being "I never even think about disconnected people" and ten being "I consistently invest my time and resources in disconnected people so they may know Jesus"), how would you rate yourself? Why?**

- Be sure to dig into the "why" behind your group members' responses on this question.
- Initially, I think most people will rate themselves fairly low and be a little hard on themselves. My initial rating for myself is low. But in reality, most people are doing more than they think to "go" as Jesus instructed. If they have relationships with people who are not connected to Christ or the Church, then they are "going". If they pray at all for people who are disconnected, they are "going". If they are

serving in a weekly volunteer area at MLC, they are investing in the lives of the disconnected who walk through the doors each week. This includes everything from parking cars and serving coffee to holding babies and sitting on the floor with second graders in KRAZE. The weekend services are all about helping disconnected people come to know Jesus, and the weekends wouldn't happen without our great volunteers. If someone is involved in giving financial resources to Because We Care, then they are "going". They are helping partner with MLC to reach disconnected people all over the world. Think about the people in your group and what they are involved in and help encourage them. We could all grow in our involvement of the Great Commission, but don't pass by the opportunity to encourage the heart of your group in terms of how they have grown and how far they've come.

**3. What are some possible ways that you can be more intentional about fulfilling the Great Commission in the context of your family?**

- There are a lot of possibilities for this question: praying for family members; praying together as a family for those around you who are disconnected; reconciling a relationship in your family so others can see Christ in you, etc.

**\*Community?**

- Getting involved in the community is important. This can be done through organizations such as the PTA or Homeowner's Association. It can also be accomplished through joining a gym to meet people outside the church walls. There are so many ways within the community that you can get involved. Brainstorm with your group. Personally, I am working on meeting people in my neighborhood and building relationships with them. This is way out of my comfort zone, so I am having to work extremely hard at this.

**\*Work?**

- Keep running with the ideas of how to build those relationships and invest in people's lives so that they can experience the love and acceptance of Jesus through you. It is through relationships that people are most likely to experience the love of Christ and be more open to having a relationship with Him.

**\*Church?**

- Some people in your group may need to be baptized and take a step to fulfill the Great Commission by going public with their faith. Some might need to attend Volunteer Orientation where they can use the gifts God has given them to be a part of Mountain Lake's mission to provide a place where the disconnected can belong and become.

**4. Part of the Great Commission states, "Go make disciples of all nations..." Have you experienced this verse by going on a short term mission trip? If so, share about your experience(s) and how they have affected your life and relationship with God.**

- Allow people to share from their hearts about their trips. If no one in your group has gone on a trip, encourage people to ask God how He wants to use them in "all nations". Take the opportunity to Share the Vision with your group about signing up for a trip to "go" to one of our strategic missions'

partners in the next year. The missions table, located in the lobby, has all the information about upcoming trips. Encourage your group members to stop by the missions table and check it out.

**5. As a group, take time to pray for some of our strategic missions' partnerships in the following ways:**

**Pray for local churches in each area to have influence with disconnected people.**

**Pray for God to work in the lives of the people that are disconnected from Christ and the church in each city below.**

**Pray for God to work in my life and this church so we may have greater impact in the following areas:**

**Slidell, LA; Cairo, Egypt; Kingston, Jamaica**

- Take about 10-15 minutes to pray for each city and the specific requests listed. Open the prayer time and ask someone to close it. Let others pray in between. No one has to pray a sermon; just pray for the specific requests together.
- We haven't done this before in groups, and some people have never done this before in their lives. **Everyone** cannot actually travel to these places for various reasons, but we can all be a part of the Great Commission by praying for the churches, disconnected people in these areas, and those who are going to these places. God has allowed our church the privilege and opportunity to reach beyond our local community to the far ends of the earth to impact disconnected people. Each person in groups can be a part of His work in these areas by praying. God answers the prayers of His people and is delighted when we pray for those He cares about who are disconnected from Him.