

The Great Commission

Scripture: Acts 1:1-11

by Christian Anible

As Christians we are called to be witnesses of Christ. This study examines the instructions Jesus gave his followers before he left them to carry on his mission.

Getting Started:

In common usage, what is a witness?

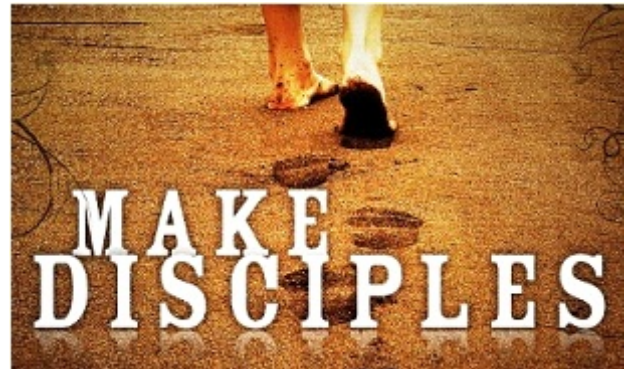
What are ways people are witnesses in everyday situations? *[Think of news reporting, an accident scene or a court scene.]*

1. Acts is Dr. Luke's sequel to his Gospel, taking up the story where he left off in the book of Luke. Read Luke 24:36–53 to set the stage for the opening to Acts.

2. Now **read Acts 1:1–11**. How was Jesus occupied during the time between his resurrection and his ascension into heaven? How would these things prepare the disciples for his departure?

3. Why couldn't they begin spreading the word of the kingdom of God immediately? What did Jesus mean by "the promise of the Father"? (See John 14:16–17, 25–26 for more background.)

4. What expectation is reflected in the disciples' question in verse 6? *[Note: Most Jewish people had expected the Messiah to be a political/military ruler who would set Israel free from Roman rule and establish Israel as a*



great political power.] How does Jesus redirect their attention [verses 7–8]? Are there similar concerns we struggle with that can distract us from our primary responsibilities as Jesus' representatives? How should we keep these in proper perspective?

5. What are the disciples told they'll receive in verse 8? For what purpose will they receive it? What is the scope of their assignment? If this had taken place in your town or on your campus, what places could be substituted for those in verse 8?

6. What happened next? What kinds of reactions might this have produced among the disciples? What do the men in white robes tell the disciples? How would this information have helped the disciples just then? And later? At the beginning we defined witness. In verse 8 the disciples were called to be witnesses to Jesus. How does this call extend to us?

In Closing:

Spend some time praying for power to be witnesses to the person and work of Jesus, beginning where we are and continuing to the ends of the earth.

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Bible Reference: Acts 1:1-11

1In my former book, *Theophilus*, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach

2until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen.

3After his suffering, he showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God.

4On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: “Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about.

5For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.”

6So when they met together, they asked him, “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?”

7He said to them: “It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority.

8But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

9After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight.

10They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them.

11“Men of Galilee,” they said, “why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.”