



## PREPARATION

- > **Spend the week studying Matthew 28:16-20, John 14:16, and Hebrews 13:5b-6.** Consult the commentary provided and any additional study tools to enhance your preparation.
- > **Determine** which discussion points and questions will work best with your group.
- > **Pray** for our pastors and this week's message, the upcoming group time, your group members, and their receptivity to God's Word.
- > **Focus on the Main Point.** When you give your life to Jesus and rest in His abiding presence, He will always be with you.

## INTRODUCTION

Share the best time you have worked on a project as a part of a team. What did you like about it?

Can you think of some things we have to do in life that are better to do with another person? Why?

**Community with others is built into human nature. God saw in Genesis that it was not good for man to be alone (Gen 2:18). Adam was better off with Eve. He needed someone like him to help him work in the garden. God called a group of people to Himself in Israel. He calls all Christians to commune with one another in church. Many things in life are better done in the company of others. But even the best company is not ever present. This is not the case with Jesus; He is not like other people. One of the greatest truths of the Bible is that God is with us always if we place our faith in Jesus Christ.**

## LEARN

### **HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ MATTHEW 28:16-20.**

What is the context for these verses? What is Jesus asking the disciples to do?

Who is Jesus speaking to? What type of relationship had they had with Jesus up to this point?

What promise does the Great Commission end with? What implications does this have for us as we share the gospel? What implications does this have for our daily lives?

What authority does Jesus have to ensure the promise to be with us? What confidence does that give you?

**At the end of Jesus' earthly ministry, He gave His followers the incredible charge to make disciples of every nation on the face of the Earth. Undeniably, this is a daunting task for any one to accomplish. But the great hope of this promise is that Jesus would be with them and is with us personally as we engage the world on mission. As Jesus had been with the disciples for the past three years, He would continue to be with them. Jesus was able to promise this because He is God. Jesus is all powerful and all knowing. Nothing is beyond His power or ability.**

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**HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ JOHN 14:16.**

If Jesus is not physically with us, how does He uphold His promise to always be with us in the present age?

What are some examples of the Holy Spirit's work through the rest of the New Testament? How is He our Helper, as Jesus said He would be?

Read John 16:8 and Matthew 10:19. How does the Holy Spirit give us God's presence when we share the gospel?

Read John 20:22. How was the promise of John 14:16 fulfilled in this verse? What affect did the Holy Spirit have on the early disciples' witness?

**Though Jesus is not here, the Holy Spirit is, according to Jesus' promise in John 14. According to Jesus it is better for us that He is not here (John 16:7). When Jesus was with the disciples, He could only be at one place at a time. With the Holy Spirit, God is with every individual Christian all the time. When we are sharing the gospel, God is there, giving His presence and power to us, convicting the hearts of those who hear, and giving us words to say.**

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**HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ HEBREWS 13:5B-6.**

What hope does it give you that God will never leave you? How have you experienced God's presence during difficulty or hardship?

Read Isaiah 43:1-2. What circumstances does Isaiah describe in these verses? What might they be analogous to in your life?

Answer the question in verse 6 for yourself. If God is always with us, what can men do to us?

**There is never a time in our lives when God is not with us. No hardship or threat can ever chance that. We have hope and confidence that if God is for us, no one can be against us. God is always with us; we have no reason to fear or doubt what we face.**

## LIVE

What effect does it have on your life to know God is always with you personally? Does that challenge you in any way?

How have you experienced the presence of the Holy Spirit when sharing the gospel with someone who does not know Christ?

## LEAD

If you are going through hardship or trouble, how might you lean on God's promise to always be with you to move forward?

God is only with you always if you are a Christian. Since God is present with us in gospel witness, who do you need to invite to enter into a relationship with God?

## PRAY

**Pray and thank God for always being with us. Praise Him because there is never a time we are without Him. Ask Him to give you a renewed awareness of the presence of the Holy Spirit. Pray that as you share the gospel or face hardship that you would sense the real presence of God comforting and empowering you to do His will.**

## FOLLOW UP

Midway through this week, send a follow-up email to your group with some or all of the following:

1. **How can you rely on God's presence daily?**
2. **Memorize Matthew 28:20.**

## COMMENTARY

**MATTHEW 28:16-20.**

28:16-17. Some time during the forty days of Jesus' post-resurrection stay on earth (probably soon after they heard the news that Sunday), the eleven disciples and many more of Jesus' followers proceeded to Galilee, where Jesus had instructed them to go (26:32; 28:7, 10). Here Matthew's focus was back on the eleven, the foundation stones of his church. Jesus had apparently specified a particular mountain as their meeting place. At the end of the journey, presumably on the designated mountain, they saw him. Imagine their joy! It was only natural that they worshiped him. But some doubted (the word doubt means "to duplicate," "to be of two minds," or "to waver, hesitate"). All wanted to believe, but their faith was weak. Some experienced the internal tug-of-war between "two minds"—the one wanting to follow their fledgling faith and the other wanting to follow "reason." Even those presented with clear evidence for the truth can still have doubts. But the word some implied there were others who believed everything they saw. These were the followers of the Messiah-King who would continue on into Acts, willing to take any risk in obedience to their master. This was true faith in action, living on the edge of "risky" obedience.

28:18 Before the resurrection, Jesus had authority (7:29; 9:6,8; 11:27; 21:23). However, through the resurrection, the Father granted Him all authority over heaven and... earth, an authority far greater than that which Satan had vainly promised Him (see note at 4:8-9).

28:19 The command to extend their mission worldwide brings to a climax Matthew's repeated theme of Gentile participation in God's salvation. The inclusion of four Gentile women in Jesus' genealogy and the summons of the magi to worship the infant Christ foreshadowed the disciples' mission of making disciples of all nations. Baptism marked a person's entrance into the faith community. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit is a reference to the Trinity. Matthew's language shows that a clear understanding of Jesus' nature and identity as God was required before baptism.

28:20 The Great Commission (vv. 19-20) is preceded by a reference to Jesus' authority and followed by the promise of Jesus' spiritual presence among us. Both are necessary if we are to fulfill our God-given mission..

**JOHN 14:16.**

14:16-17 Another Counselor or the Spirit of truth is the Holy Spirit (v. 26), who guides disciples into all truth (16:13). The Spirit replaces Jesus' physical presence by permanently indwelling His followers. Divine presence for Jesus' followers includes the Spirit (14:15-17), Jesus (vv. 18-21), and the Father (vv. 22-24).

**HEBREWS 13:5B-6.**

13:5. Another threat to family stability is materialism. Obeying two features could control materialism. First, renounce love of money. Do not make the possession of money an end in itself. Second, be content with what you have. The presence of God in all of life encourages such contentment. Knowing the Lord will not abandon us gives us the stability to enjoy what he gives us (Deut. 31:6, 8). Enjoying his unflinching presence is better than coveting glistening billions of gold.

13:6. Another threat to family life is anxiety. Encouraging words from Psalm 118:6-7 remind us that God's presence in life banishes anxiety about personal needs. This is the only New Testament verse describing God as a helper. Hebrews 2:18 uses the verbal form of the word to picture Jesus as a source of help for the tempted (cf. Mark 9:22; 2 Cor. 6:2).