



# MISSION

OUR PART IN GOD'S PLAN

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by CJ Harris

**HOT**  
**SHOTS**

Mission: Our Part in God's Plan

Written by CJ Harris

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In March 2012, the population of the world passed the seven billion mark, with experts predicting eight billion by 2025. But just saying seven billion people doesn't mean our minds can fully grasp the immensity of the world's population. Seven billion is enough people to populate 7,000 cities with one million people each. If you stacked seven billion people onto each other's shoulders, you'd have a human ladder that reaches the moon—and back—14 times!

If the number is hard to grasp, it's even more daunting to comprehend the logistics of reaching such a large number of people with the gospel. The difficulty only intensifies when we consider that the majority of the population lives in regions antagonistic to missionaries and Christianity in general.

The church faces a massive challenge, but we face it with an even greater promise. Jesus calls us to reach the world, but He also promises to give us the power to accomplish that task (Acts 1:8). Through this study, I pray our missionary God will challenge you and your students to go into all of His creation and proclaim His message.

## Lesson Format

Hot Shots are written with a firm belief that the Word of God is the primary life-changing element that the Holy Spirit uses to do His work. You can be assured that we will not depend upon psychology, values clarification, touchy-feely questions, or humanistic methods. Instead, we will allow Scripture to reveal God's character to the teens, thereby exposing them to His life-changing power. We stand unashamedly upon the Word of God, which is quick and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword.

While the writing staff at Positive Action For Christ understands that all our lessons must be centered in the Bible, we also see the need for helping the teacher by including creative teaching ideas. These creative ideas are simply sermon illustrations taken one step further. Instead of talking about opening a window in an illustration, we ask you to open it. Instead of imagining how destructive the tongue can be, you should present an object lesson to show them. These ideas can enhance your lesson and help teens grasp the truth of God's Word.

Our belief is that through object lessons and illustrations we are better able to imitate the teaching of Jesus Christ. He depended wholly upon the Scriptures for the content of His lessons, but He also used coins, trees, water, and more to illustrate His teaching.

Each Hotshot follows the same lesson format throughout the study.



The Warm Up opens the door of the student's mind to the main lesson. This may include handouts, object lessons, or stimulating questions.



The Bridge transitions the teen from the warm-up into the main text of Scripture that you will be teaching.



The Content is the main body of the lesson, focusing on Bible exposition and application.



The Closing summarizes the lesson and calls for a commitment to the truth.

## Before you start the study...

Read the Introduction, Course Objectives and Overview. It is important that you understand the scope of this study before you teach it.

## Before each lesson...

1. Read through the lesson and take note of the Lesson Aim, Objectives, and the materials needed for creative teaching segments.
2. Plan ahead to modify the lesson if necessary. Your facilities or equipment may limit you. Substitute your own ideas if necessary.
3. Each lesson can be taught in 20–30 minutes, but preparation can let you shorten or lengthen the lesson as needed.
4. Use excitement when you teach! An excited teacher produces students who are excited about learning. If you don't feel that one of our teaching ideas or warm ups will excite your teens, spend some time and develop one that will work.



## Course Objectives

By the end of this course students will:

- Recognize that God’s plan is global in scope
- Understand their part in God’s plan
- Understand the importance of prayer in missions
- Recognize the necessity of giving to missions
- Examine the part God has for them in missions

## Overview

### **Lesson 1: Our Missionary God**

- **Lesson Aim:** To show that God’s plan reaches to the entire world
- **Text:** Various

### **Lesson 2: Our Mission**

- **Lesson Aim:** To show that every believer has a mission from God
- **Text:** Matthew 28:18–20; 22:34–40

### **Lesson 3: Holding the Ropes: The Importance of Prayer in Missions**

- **Lesson Aim:** To learn the biblical importance of prayer in mission work
- **Text:** Luke 10:1–4; Ephesians 6:18–20

### **Lesson 4: Investing in Eternity: Giving to Missions**

- **Lesson Aim:** To examine what the Bible teaches about giving to support missions
- **Text:** Philippians 4:10–19

### **Lesson 5: Witnesses to the World: Answering God’s Call**

- **Lesson Aim:** To consider your part in fulfilling the Great Commission
- **Texts:** Matthew 28:16–20; Acts 8:4

## LESSON 1

# Our Missionary God

Our God is a missionary God. This may not be the first characteristic that comes to your mind when you think of the Almighty, but as you consider His character and works, it becomes evident that God is a missionary. From His visiting with Adam in the Garden of Eden to His sending of Jesus to seek and to save the lost, God reaches out to mankind with the offer of redemption and relationship. If our purpose as believers is to glorify God by reflecting His likeness, then any call to missions must begin by studying God's missionary heart.



***To show that God's plan reaches to the entire world***



***Students will:***

- Discuss ways in which God has reached out to fallen mankind
- Examine the Scripture for evidence of God's missionary nature and plan
- Recognize that the Great Commission is a command for all Christians to continue the work of Christ



***Various passages***

In this lesson we will survey several texts, beginning with creation and the Abrahamic covenant and moving through Christ's mission and His commission of the church. We will also examine the early missionary nature of the church and the ultimate inclusion of "all nations" in the glorious revelation of heaven. This survey will show that God has always planned to receive glory from the whole world.

# The Lesson



Begin the meeting by asking the group, “How do we know about God?” Allow the group to discuss the question. There are many possible answers—creation, the Bible, providences, the image of God in us (i.e., conscience, will, emotion). Lead the group to some of the answers if necessary.



All of these ways that we can know God share one important element. They each require God to make the first move. We could never study creation if God had not created. We could never read about God in the Word if He had not inspired men to write it down. We could never examine God’s providences in our life if He were not the kind of God who worked on behalf of His children. And we could never study the image of God in man if God had not placed it there.

At its heart, missions is about reaching out to others with the message of God so that they can know God and have an eternal relationship with Him. Therefore, the greatest missionary of all time is not Paul the Apostle, but God Himself. Throughout Scripture, we see God reaching out to humankind with a revelation of Himself in order to establish a relationship between God and us.

## The Old Testament Shows the Foundation of God’s Missionary Plan for the World



When God created Adam and Eve, He gave them a familiar command: “Don’t eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.” But there is another command that God gave even earlier, which you may not be as familiar with. We find it in Genesis 1:28. Here God commands the first man and woman to be fruitful and to fill the whole earth. From the beginning, God’s plan focused on the whole world.

We know that man sinned. In love, God promised a Savior that would deal with the sin that now plagued His creation (Gen. 3:15). Though eventually people did begin to fill the earth, they were wicked. They became so bad that God destroyed the earth with a flood, and all except for Noah’s family were destroyed. We may be tempted to think that this changed God’s plan, but it didn’t. After Noah exited the ark, God gave him the same command God had given to Adam and Eve. God told Noah and his family to be fruitful, to multiply, and to fill the earth (Gen. 9:1).

Three chapters later God called a man named Abram—later, Abraham—to become the father of a great nation (Gen. 12:1–3). It may appear at first glance that God had finally given up on a world full of sin and idolatry, settling instead for a single nation, but even here God restated the worldwide scope of His plan. God told Abram that his children would be blessed and that God would use that nation to bless the entire world.

That blessing would ultimately come in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The rest of the Old Testament presents the history of Abraham's children, the nation of Israel. Yet even as the story focuses in on Israel, God repeatedly reveals that He plans for His message to reach the entire world..

**Discussion:** Divide your students into groups and distribute copies of "God Reaching the World." Have each group look up the passages and note the evidence that God's plan—even in the Old Testament—reached beyond the nation of Israel. Discuss the group's findings before moving on to the New Testament.

Answers:

Joshua 2:1, 8–11—Rahab; hears rumors of God's miraculous working for Israel

Ruth 1:1–8, 16–18—Ruth; husband dies and she returns to Israel with her mother-in-law

1 Kings 17:8–24—Widow of Zarephath; God leads a prophet to her home during a severe famine

Jonah 1:4–16—Sailors to Tarshish; God sends a terrible storm and a reluctant prophet

Jonah 3:1, 4–10—Ninevah; the people repent after a reluctant Jonah delivers a message of God's judgment

## The New Testament Shows the Heart of God's Missionary Plan for the World

God's missionary plan to the world continues into the New Testament, climaxing in the life and work of Jesus Christ. Jesus came as the Light, sent by God into the whole world with the purpose of enlightening every man (John 1:9). When the angels announced His birth, they proclaimed that the good news was for all people (Luke 2:10). Jesus also declared that His mission was to seek and save those who were lost (Luke 19:10).

Though Jesus' ministry was predominately among the Jews, He also showed God's concern for the world by ministering to Gentiles as well. He ministered to the Samaritan woman at the well in John 4. He praised the faith of a Canaanite woman in Tyre (Matt. 15:21–28) even though she descended from the perennial enemies of Israel. Even in the days leading up to the crucifixion, Jesus took time to speak with a group of Grecians (John 12:20–22). God reached out to the whole world through His Son.

After the resurrection, Christ gave final instructions to the disciples to carry His message to the uttermost corners of the world (Acts 1:8). This began what we often consider the beginning of world mission work. But missions did not begin in the Book of Acts. The work of Peter, Paul, and others was merely the next step in the long-standing mission of God.

What You Need  
Copies of "God Reaching the World"  
Pens or pencils

## Eternity Will Show the Triumph of God's Missionary Plan for the World

The Book of Revelation gives a glimpse of the final triumph of God's missionary plan to redeem people from every corner of the world. As the hosts of heaven behold the Lamb upon the throne, they sing a new song, declaring Christ worthy to open the seven seals. The heavenly choir bases its praise on the fact that the Lamb who had been slain has redeemed men from every nation, language, tribe, and people (Rev. 5:9). Christ has accomplished the missionary plan of the Father.

Revelation ends with the redeemed of every nation once more enjoying unhindered fellowship with God for all eternity (Rev. 21:5–7). Man rebelled in the Garden, but God did not abandon us. God sought His people and sent His Son to accomplish His mission. Through this, God revealed Himself as the greatest missionary ever—and gave us the reason we should be earnest about missions.



**Discussion:** Why is understanding the missionary heart of God so important? Knowing what we do about God, is it ever right for a believer to say that he doesn't believe God has called him to be part of missions work? Why would that statement be untrue?

# GOD REACHING THE WORLD

Look up the following passages, each of which give evidence that God's plan has always included the entire world. Write the name of the person or people God redeems and how He reaches them.

## **Joshua 2:1, 8-11**

Person or Group: \_\_\_\_\_

How God Reaches Them: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Ruth 1:1-8, 16-18**

Person or Group: \_\_\_\_\_

How God Reaches Them: \_\_\_\_\_

## **1 Kings 17:8-24**

Person or Group: \_\_\_\_\_

How God Reaches Them: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Jonah 1:4-16**

Person or Group: \_\_\_\_\_

How God Reaches Them: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Jonah 3:1, 4-10**

Person or Group: \_\_\_\_\_

How God Reaches Them: \_\_\_\_\_

## LESSON 2

# Our Mission

If God is on a mission to redeem men for His glory, it stands to reason that His children have a part to play in that mission. In other words, if we serve a missionary God, then we should expect that we, too, have a mission. Put in its simplest terms, our mission is to be used by God to accomplish His mission.



**To show that every believer has a mission from God**



**Students will:**

- Examine the universal mandate of the Great Commission
- Discuss how the two great commandments fit into the Great Commission
- Recognize that we can accomplish our mission only by God's grace enabling us



**Matthew 28:18–20; 22:34–40**

In this lesson we will examine the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18–20) and the greatest commandments (Matt. 22:34–40). These two passages lay out the framework for our part in God's mission. They also provide a clear way for every believer to join that mission.

## The Lesson



Before the meeting, plan a treasure hunt with four or five clues each leading to the next. If you are working with a larger group,

## What You Need

Prize for winner(s) of the treasure hunt

you may want to divide them into teams. Be sure the instructions on each clue are very clear (e.g., look under the middle couch cushion of the brown couch in the teen room). If you do use teams, award a small prize to the group that finishes most quickly.



Settle the teens into their seats and ask, “What is a mission?” Discuss the fact that a mission is an assigned task. Teens are given “missions” all the time—clean your room, read pages 100–121, meet at church at 9am for the activity. Today we are going to look at the mission God has given to us.

**T** Have you ever gotten confused about an assignment for school? Maybe you read the wrong pages or did the wrong problems. Have you ever shown up at the wrong time for a youth activity or a party? You end up waiting for an extra hour or missing out on all the fun because you were too late. Making these kinds of mistakes can damage your grades or your social life. But there is something even more important—something that you really don’t want to be confused about.

God has a mission for you. More than a mere assignment or event, this mission speaks to every aspect of your life and touches on every relationship you will ever have. With a mission this important, we would expect that God would make our instructions very clear—and He has. In two passages in Matthew, Jesus lays out the basics of our part in God’s great mission.

## The Great Commission

Matthew 28:18–20

Imagine briefly that the richest man in the world called you and said, “I want to give your church a new youth group activity building. In the mail tomorrow you will receive a credit card tied to my account. I’ve already hired a construction company, but I want you and your friends to go out and buy everything you think you’ll need inside the building. By the way, there’s no credit limit, so get whatever you want.”

When Jesus gave His final command to the disciples, He prefaced it with an amazing statement. He told the disciples that all power and authority belonged to Him (Matt. 28:18). Jesus had sole rights to everything in heaven and on earth. In fact, He declares Himself the sole ruler of all. This amazing position meant that Jesus could give an equally amazing command—a command that reached into the whole world. We are called to invite others to follow after the King of Kings.

**Discussion:** Is there any part of the world where Jesus does not have authority? No, but there are many places where men resist Jesus’ authority. Will we ever be in a place where we have no right to preach about Jesus? What are some ways Jesus’ worldwide authority could change the way you view your mission in the world?

After declaring His authority, Jesus moves into the Great Commission. He says, “Because of My authority, you can go everywhere and tell them about Me. As you do so, even more people will become My disciples” (Matt. 28:19a). This is God’s plan to grow His people, and it has not changed since He shared it two millennia ago. We go out planting the seed of the gospel and watering it with our testimony of Christ. Then God uses our planting and watering to bring others to faith in Him (1 Cor. 3:6).

The rest of verse 19 calls on new believers to identify with God through baptism. Baptism, at its heart, is a public declaration of what Jesus has done for you—a visible testimony that you are now His disciple. In the early church, baptisms were typically public events that declared the person had left his old gods and turned to Jesus. Even today, people will often invite their family and friends to come witness their baptism.

Once they are saved and baptized, a final task remains. We must teach them the Word of God. As a disciple of Jesus, we are both His followers and His students. You will never stop learning as a believer, and God has called you to teach what you have learned to others.

**Discussion:** What are some ways you can teach? Who are some young believers that God has placed in your life that you could teach?

That’s a pretty big mission. But Jesus closes out the Great Commission with a promise that gives us every reason to expect success. He says that He is with us always and that He’ll stay with us until the end. We go in His power, not our own. We can succeed only by seeking Christ’s power in prayer, not by manipulating others.

## The Great Commandments

Matthew 22:34–40

Another teaching of Christ helps us at this point—the Great Commandments. If we are going to teach others everything that God has commanded, we must do it in a way that reflects the greatest of those commandments. Otherwise, it would be like trying to get everyone to stay in line while you were cutting your way to the front. We find these two greatest commandments in Matthew 22:34–40.

Matthew 22 records several attempts by the enemies of Jesus to trip Him up with hard questions. After Jesus answered some questions from the Herodians and the Sadducees (22:15–33), a Pharisee tried to stump Jesus.

This was a time-honored tradition among these religious parties. They sat around trying to think up hard questions to make the other groups look foolish when they couldn’t answer. It wasn’t much of a hobby, but it seemed to entertain them. One way they often tried to stump each other was to ask, “What is the greatest commandment?” According to the Talmud, there are 613 commandments in the Old Testament. Imagine

how much time they could waste arguing about a multiple-choice question with 613 answers!

**Discussion:** What are some commands that you think the Pharisees might have considered the greatest commandment? What makes you think this?

When the question was posed to Jesus, He didn't bat an eye. Without hesitation He said, "Love God with all your heart, soul, and mind. This is the greatest commandment." Then He added a second: "Also, you must love your neighbor as yourself." Jesus explained that the rest of the commandments—all 611—were covered by these two.

This is great news. Everyone has the ability—by God's grace—to love. What if the greatest command was to enter God's house with singing, and you were tone deaf? Or if it was to vanquish all the enemies of God, and you would lose an arm-wrestling competition against a second grader? Or what if God required you to memorize the whole New Testament, and you sometimes forget your own address? Though some tasks require skills we may not have, anyone can love. Love requires only that you yield your gifts and will to God, for His glory and the good of others.



So what is your mission? Get to know God so that your love for Him grows daily. Then, out of that love for God, do the most loving things you can for others—tell them about Him and invite them to become His disciples as well. To fulfill the Great Commission is to live out the two Greatest Commandments. And what you do doesn't have to be big. Jesus said that even giving a cup of water in love to another person is worthy of reward (Mark 9:41). The Great Commission gives us our marching orders to proclaim the gospel; the Great Commandments give us the motivation.

**Handout:** Distribute copies of "Living Your Mission." Give everyone time to complete the handout, and invite teens to share some of the ways they plan to join God's mission to the world.

## What You Need

Copies of "Living Your Mission"

Pens or pencils

# Living Your Mission

In the spaces below, record five ways that God could use you to fulfill the Great Commission and live out the Great Commandments this week. Pray for God to give you the grace to do your part in His mission.

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_