

Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church  
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*“The Never Alone Church”<sup>1</sup>*

**Lesson 14: “Restoring Great Commandment Ministry to the Church”**

**Goal:** *To become the “The Never Alone Church” by practicing the Great Commandment of Love with our community of believers. This will enable us to fulfill the mandate given in the Great Commission.*

**Objective:** **To understand God’s plan for participating in restoring Great Commandment Ministry to the Church.**

**Introduction:**

As we grow in our relationship with God, we are hoping to grow in our ability to minister relevantly to others. This is important in the process of becoming “The Never Alone Church.” According to the author of the Never Alone Church, David Ferguson, “The constraining love of God’s heart is nearly impossible to resist. People are drawn to God and truly worship and praise him when they understand that his first priority is not to correct our behavior but to bring us into right relationship with him. Right behavior will be a natural by-product of a loving relationship with God.”<sup>2</sup>

Our love relationship with God enables our hearts and minds to experience a continuous growth that transforms us to seek and fulfill His work, His will, His way. The evidence of our love for God is the way we represent His love for us to others. Many people need to see the love of Christ demonstrated by His people, before they will consider responding to His invitation for relationship. Members of the church family who have accepted Jesus as their personal Savior also need to witness a difference in the characteristics of those who are experiencing God’s love in a personal way.

This lesson will employ group discussions for the purposes of developing four of the twelve principles which David Ferguson outlined for restoring Great Commandment Ministry to the Church.

**Discussion Point #1**

***Great Commandment Love Thrives In an Atmosphere of Vulnerability***

**How can church leaders and mature Christians assist in sustaining an atmosphere of vulnerability for other members of their church?**

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<sup>1</sup> Ferguson, David, *The Never Alone Church*, Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1998

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, p. 235

People often perceive themselves as unworthy or not able to measure up to what it takes to be a good Christian. Their sense of worthlessness is based on a false perception, because they cannot believe anyone like them could ever become a good Christian. They need a testimony from members of the church family to help them realize that *“For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.”* [Romans 3.23] “Openness and vulnerability in church leaders are far more significant to church health and growth than any event or program.”<sup>3</sup> When church leaders are open about their struggles, failure and triumphs, they inspire members of the congregation to overcome their feelings of condemnation. This helps to meet a vital relational need.

*And He said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness. [2 Corinthians 12: 9]*

### **Discussion Point #2:**

#### ***Great Commandment Ministry Thrives When the Focus Is On Meeting Needs***

#### **How can you assist in meeting the relational needs of others?**

“God dealt with sin for a purpose of restoring relationships—people to God and people to people.”<sup>4</sup> Many people often feel guilty or self-conscious in their Christian growth and need acceptance and support from people to fulfill their relational needs. We are challenged to grow in becoming pleasing vessels of God that He will use to draw other to Himself. God’s heart is deeply moved by our physical and spiritual needs when we are endeavoring to live according to His Word. He longs to have an intimate relationship with us. He will not only meet us at the point of our need, but also provides the resources both on an individual and church wide level. This is evident as we see more churches across the country provide ongoing ministry to teach husbands, wives, singles, and parents’ vital need-meeting skills.

*But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.  
(Philippians 4:19 KJV)*

### **Discussion Point #3:**

#### ***Great Commandment Ministry Thrives When Relationships Take Priority Over Religion***

What can happen when we model and teach the priority of a love relationship with God in all the ministries of the Church?

We as a body of the believers must stay consciously aware of ways to represent our personal love relationship with God. God has ordained that only a relationship with our Redeemer, Jesus Christ, can accomplish a transformed life. Only in this relationship can we help others experience

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid, p. 217

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, p. 220

a transformed life. Belief and behavior constitutes Christian religion.<sup>5</sup> Religion alone cannot produce a transformed life.<sup>6</sup>

*For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died. [2 Corinthians 5:14]*

#### **Discussion Point #4**

#### ***Great Commandment Ministry Thrives When Servant Leadership is Modeled***

#### **How can we imitate and model Christ as our servant leader?**

Christ is the ultimate example of a servant leader. If we are to lead others who are committed to a loving God, we must be able to represent the heart of a servant. Serving the needs of others is identified as a pure motive in any leadership role. The heart of servant-hood was poignantly demonstrated when Jesus washed the feet of the disciples.<sup>7</sup> *Loving service to others is God's love in action.*<sup>8</sup> Application of the above four principles will help restore our churches to the supreme love for God and for one another.

*"Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, the servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them. [John 13:13-17 KJV]*

#### **Biblical Exercise:**

As you consider your love relationship with God, how can you minister to other members of your church family? Are you able to share a testimony to help a new believer overcome feelings of inadequacy? If you were observed by someone who wanted to see a transformed life, how would you represent your love relationship with Christ?

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid, p. 232

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, p. 232

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, p. 237

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, p. 238

***The Great Commandment of Love:***

*“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.” [Matthew 22:37-40]*

***The Great Commission:***

*Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I commanded you; and lo I am with you always, even to the end of the age. [Matthew 28:19-20, NKJV]*

**Monthly Biblical Exercises**

**December, 09 Monthly Biblical Exercise: *Forgiveness***

**January, 2010 Monthly Biblical Exercise: *Relevance for ‘The Never Alone Church***

**February, 2010 Monthly Biblical Exercise: *People Need God and One Another***

**March, 2010 Monthly Biblical Exercise: *Responding to Vital Relational Needs***

**April, 2010 Monthly Biblical Exercise: *Meeting Needs of Others with Scripture***

**May, 2010 Monthly Biblical Exercise: *Ministering to Fallenness and Aloneness***

**June, 2010 Monthly Biblical Exercise: *Ministering by Knowing God Intimately***

**October, 2010 Monthly Biblical Exercise: *Ministering by Knowing God Intimately #2***

**November, 2010 Monthly Biblical Exercise: *Where Great Commandment Love Begins***

**December, 2010 Monthly Biblical Exercise: *God’s Priority for Ministry***

**January, 2011 Monthly Biblical Exercise: *Great Commandment Love/Your Jerusalem***

**February, 2011 Monthly Biblical Exercise: *Great Commandment Love w/Family of Origin***

**March, 2011 Monthly Biblical Exercise: *Great Commandment Love w/Cherished Children***

**April, 2011 Monthly Biblical Exercise: *Restoring Great Commandment Ministry/Church***