

## A New Year Challenge

### Acts 4

Jim and Cathy sit on the front row in their church each week. They run a business and see their workplace as a platform for making disciples. Last year sixteen of their co-workers came to faith in Christ. They also take their faith outside the United States to Tanzania. Jim provides small business training for men in impoverished Tanzania, while Cathy trains Tanzanian women in trades they can develop in their homes. Jim recently told his pastor, "It really doesn't get any better than this. My heart overflows with praise that God chooses to work in me and my family."

Think about what you do for a living and the people you work with. Think about the people you know. If they do not know Christ as Savior and Lord how do you suppose they ever will? Does it matter?

What could you do to begin a process of making disciples in your realm of influence?

Some of you might be tempted to think, "Well, I don't know how to make a disciple." Or, "I'm not called to do that." Let's examine a couple of passages to see if these objections to making disciples is legitimate.

Matthew 28: 18-20. Who is in authority?

Are you included in what and who is under the authority of Jesus? Of course. What does that mean for you?

To whom is He making this command?

If His command includes you, perhaps you can begin praying about His command and discussing it with your Christian friends.

What is the greatest hindrance to your being involved in making disciples?

Now let's look at Acts 4. This a typical day in the life of the first disciples of Christ.

In chapter 3, Peter and John had really messed up. They were going up to the temple and on their way, the Holy Spirit led them to engage a lame man. The result was God healed the man. But most importantly, 5000 men were saved. Read what happens next as Peter and John continue speaking to the people.

Read verses 1-12. Pull out each thing that happened to the disciples.

What was Peter's reaction to his interrogation by the Sanhedrin?

What kind of men were Peter and John according to the Jews? Look at verse 13.

What did they recognize about them?

What do you suppose people recognize about you?

Now examine vv. 14- 18. Take note of the dilemma the Jews had in dealing with Peter and John.

What do you make of Peter and John's answer to them in vv. 19-20?

Since the Jews didn't know what to do with them, they let them go. But it wouldn't be the end of their opposing the disciples of Christ nor the end of persecution.

As we read on in vv. 23-31, we see that all the opposition and persecution could not stop the disciples from worshiping God. Examine their response of worship and prayer in these verses to discover what they believed about God and what they asked Him to do. Write it down and discuss it with your class.

The first of the year is a good time to examine our relationship with God and His purpose for our lives. Will you consider refocusing your life on the call of God to make disciples of all the nations? What role can you fill in doing so? What is God placing in your heart as you engage this challenge?

Imagine together, ordinary, everyday Christian, being led by God, making disciples and then gathering together to worship. Imagine yourself simply relating to one person who does not know Christ and as you build that relationship helping that person come to faith in Christ. Could there be anything in this world that would bring you more fulfillment and joy?