



INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Week 1 of our brand-new series, *Difference Makers*! I believe that if you're here, you're different than most teenagers your age. You've come because you understand that it's always a mistake to let comfort dictate your decisions. You're here because you know that God has a purpose for your life that is bigger than having the latest iPhone or being the most popular kid at school. You're here because you know that God wants to use you as a difference maker!

TENSION

Most people let their comfort dictate their decisions. If something is hard, they run away from it, and so they never really accomplish anything of value. If there is conflict in a relationship, they bail and never experience true and lasting love. But you understand that it's always a mistake to let comfort dictate your decisions.

[**Author Note:** This would be a great opportunity to share a personal story about a time when you let comfort dictate your decision.]

This sort of living results in looking back over a long life and wondering what could have been. What experiences did I miss out on? Who could I have had a deeper relationship with? You can sum up this sort of living with one word: regret.

For many of us, even though we believe God has a purpose for us, we struggle with living that out in our day-to-day lives. In the Bible, Jesus gives us the practical steps we long for. If we trust what His Word says, we will be able to see God do amazing things through us.

Today, we're going to look to the book of Acts to see three action steps that will help us become the difference makers God is calling us to be.

THE WORD

To give you some background, Jesus had just spent 3 1/2 years teaching, healing, and being awesome all around Israel. He amassed quite a following during that time.

Many people who previously were hopeless found hope in Jesus! Toward the end of His ministry, religious leaders who were threatened by Him had Him killed on the cross, and three days later, He rose again and appeared to over 500 people! This was a moment of incredible victory for Jesus and Christians alike.

Acts chapter 1 describes a scene when many of those followers were gathered around Jesus and anticipating something big to happen.

Let's read verses 6 and 7 together.

Acts 1:6–7

So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority."

This leads us to the first action step:

1. We should seek total trust in God.

I can relate to the disciples in this passage. What this shows us is that the disciples had an expectation of what they believed God should do. And we should keep in mind that their question was a loaded question. There had never been more tension between Christians and Jews. If Jesus wasn't going to establish His kingdom, that likely meant a greater amount of persecution was coming for Jews.

Because Jesus had different plans than the disciples, the disciples were entering into a very uncomfortable position. There was so much about the future that was outside of their control. Even when they asked the question, Jesus's response gave them no extra information or even words of comfort. There was no, "It'll be just a little longer," or, "Don't worry, it's going to be alright!" Instead, He just says, "It's not for you to know."

When we face moments of uncertainty like the disciples were facing, we sometimes feel like God isn't giving us the answer we're wanting. When this happens, we are left wondering what to do. Jesus was asking His disciples to trust Him. He was calling them to faith over comfort.

What does that look like for us, when we face moments of uncertainty? It looks like us seeking to totally trust God. Let me give you three quick, but very important, ways we can do that:

- **Don't settle on the question of why. Instead, ask, "What now?"** Because of the brokenness of this world, we may never get the answer to why. But when we ask, "What now?" we can begin to change our perspective to see how God might be wanting to leverage the challenges in our lives.
- **Find your comfort in the Scriptures.** In moments of uncertainty, most people fall into the temptation of wanting to take control of their lives apart from God. This leads them to making decisions they will later regret. Instead, we should read Scriptures and lean on the promises of God. That way, we will experience peace in the midst of the storms we face.
- **Pray honest and hopeful prayers.** When you face uncertainty and you're afraid, tell God that you're afraid. When something tragic happens in your life and you're angry with God, communicate that you're upset. When those things happen and we pretend like nothing is wrong, it actually leads us to lose faith, because we're living as if the problem is too big for God to handle. A truly hopeful prayer is one that says, "God, my situation feels like it is outside of my control and I'm upset and scared. But your Word says that all things work together for the good of those who love you, so teach my heart to trust you in the midst of this challenge."

That word "total" is an important word. By its very nature, trust requires not having all of the facts and not being in control. If you had all the facts and were able to control every outcome, there would be no need for us to trust God. Total trust in God's plan is what it means to have faith.

Thankfully, God doesn't leave us to fight these battles alone. Let's keep reading in Acts 1. Let's look at verse 8:

Acts 1:8

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you.

Let's pause there, because this leads us to the second action item:

2. Live expecting God to do amazing things through you.

Let's remember the context we're dealing with. The people in charge just killed Jesus. When they asked Jesus if He was going to set up His earthly kingdom, He basically said, "No," and gave them no other information. In that moment, I'm sure the disciples were looking at each other with concern about what the future held for them.

Then, Jesus throws this game changer out to them: "You will receive POWER when the Holy Spirit has come upon you." BOOM! Game, set, match! Checkmate. Game over!

Think about it this way: imagine you were a little kid playing touch football with some older kids on your block. They're all bigger, faster, and stronger than you. No matter what you do, you aren't able to be very successful. Over time, your confidence will diminish, and you may give up.

But now, imagine if one day, Tom Brady and the New England Patriots came out and decided to be on your team. Immediately, your confidence would go through the roof! Why? Because the Patriots are really good, and there is no group of 12-year-olds who can compete with them.

If we walk with obedience and trust God's leading, when we speak and work for the glory of God, we are speaking with the greatest source of power this world has ever seen. Who can stand up and compete against God? Nobody!

You see, Jesus is not saying, "Just set your mind on living for Jesus and try real hard, and you might do some good in the world." Jesus is promising us THE power source that raised Him from the dead! This is what the apostle Paul was saying in Romans:

Romans 8:11 (ESV)

If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.

When we understand this, we know that it doesn't matter who goes up against us. When we are living for God, He fights our battles for us!