



**Educate
+ Engage**



DIFFERENCE
MAKERS:



Service
Requires Action

OVERVIEW

This second lesson of our Difference Makers series focuses on serving. Yes, serving. In our first lesson we explored an important question: "If the heart of Jesus is service, how close is your heart to His heart?" We talked about the why of serving, and now we are going to discuss how to serve.

Scripture Passage

Mark 12:28–31 (NKJV)



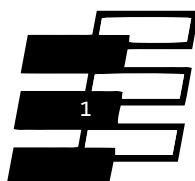
Then one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, perceiving that He had answered them well, asked Him, "Which is the first commandment of all?" Jesus answered him, "The first of all the commandments is: 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.' This is the first commandment. And the second, like it, is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these."

EDUCATE

Sometimes when the Bible tells us to do something a little uncomfortable—like making a difference by serving others or standing out or standing up for something—we hesitate. Being an authentic difference maker, one who serves the kingdom of God rather than serving selfish desires, requires action.

There is a big difference in knowing what to do and actually doing it. We know what to say, how to say it, and how to look the part, but when it's time to step up . . . silence.

We often talk about having a favorite Bible verse, but sometimes we have a least favorite verse too (not because we don't like it, but because it's hard to obey even though it holds so much truth). James 4:17 is one of these verses that's sometimes not high on our list because of the way it challenges us: "Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin."



Lesson 2

This is what Bible students call a sin of omission. You see, most people focus on the sins of commission, meaning we *do* sinful things like cheating on a test or lying to our parents. But this verse cautions about sins of omission: the things we know we should do but we don't do them.

In the Scripture Passage for this lesson (Mark 12:28–31) Jesus narrowed down all the laws and teachings of the people of His time to two commandments: love God and love others. If we are to build God's kingdom in the lives around us, we are to do both of these things. They go hand in hand. When we are serving others, we are loving God. When we are loving others, we are also loving God. We should also remember His words recorded in Matthew 7:12: "Whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them."

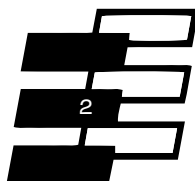
Even if you didn't grow up in church, you've probably heard the "Golden Rule." We know the things we are supposed to do, but actually doing them can be difficult. The hardest part about being a difference maker who serves is not that we are self-centered; sometimes we don't serve because we are scared. Sometimes we are scared of what we have to give up, of what others may think, of what God might call us to do, or of looking "extreme."

We fear that following Jesus, loving Him, and loving others as ourselves means we will have to give up whatever is taking up most of our time and keeping us away from God and His calling on our lives. Some may not serve at a missions event because they would rather play sports or video games. Others don't want to give up downtime. Some get so lost in social media that they forget they signed up to help out at a church event.

Jesus was clear: "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matthew 6:21). We can also say it like this: where your time is, there your energy and passion will be also. Sometimes we choose not to serve because we are afraid of what we might have to give up.

We might also be scared of being awkward and what people may think. Many people would rather not talk to anyone than be in an awkward conversation. We fear not knowing what to do or say, and most of all, we fear seeming awkward.

What God might call us to do can also be scary. What if He calls you to go on an Apostolic Youth Corps trip? What if He wants you to be an AIMER to a foreign country? What if He wants you to intern at a church plant for the summer? What if He calls you to speak up when you see something that is wrong? Or He calls you to say something when no one else is saying something? Or to stand up for someone or to express concern to a friend for displaying poor judgment?



Lesson 2

Very few people want to be viewed as a religious extremist. It's a legitimate fear because in today's world, when we stand up for our faith, we may be seen as "extreme."

But if you are an Apostolic Jesus follower, you already know what you should be doing to love your neighbor as yourself. It's time to move past the knowing phase and dive into the doing phase. Remember, knowing what to do and actually doing it aren't the same.

Serving the Lord and others is serious business. In Matthew 25:31–45 Jesus warned those who don't understand this concept. The responsibility of loving God, loving others, and making a difference is pretty intense. The weight of Jesus' words leave no question about the degree to which He calls His followers to partake in the kingdom of God. Selfishness has no place. We must faithfully serve God and others.

Discussion Question: Can people see how much we love God just by looking at how well we are serving others?

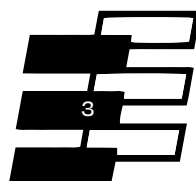
The command to love the Lord with all our heart comes from the *Shema* which the Jews recited daily (Deuteronomy 6:4–5). But what does it mean to love God? How do we fulfill the command in Leviticus 19:18 to love our neighbor as ourselves? In Matthew 22, Jesus said: "All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments." Our world generally acknowledges the greatness of the second commandment, but sadly so many people ignore the first commandment.

Closing

What about you? Are you obeying God's commands? What do you need to do to love Him with all? To love your neighbor more?

According to Jesus in Matthew 25, people of the earth will be divided like sheep and goats. Jesus will judge the goats on His left and reward the sheep on His right. But how?

The core message of the Parable of the Sheep and Goats is that God's people will love others. Good works result from our relationship to our Shepherd. Followers of Jesus will treat others with kindness, serving them as if they were serving Jesus Himself. While "goats" can indeed perform acts of kindness and charity, their hearts are not yet right with God and their actions are not always for the right purpose, which is to honor and worship God.



~~THE~~ ENGAGE

Consider this challenge: think about how your behavior would change if you treated each person in your life as if he or she were Jesus. True faith should make a major change in our lives. Let's ask God to examine our motives and make sure we are doing right for the right reason.

(Explain the Difference Maker Cards recommended for this series. The cards have random acts of service noted on them. Students should pick a card at random and commit to completing the suggestion on the card before the next class. The point is to encourage them to go beyond knowing to do good and to actually doing something to make a difference.)

Spend some time praying with your peers for God to help you do what you know to do: to love Him with all and to love others as we love ourselves. Do not skip this precious, important time of prayer together.

