

**LESSON 6:**

# WHAT CAN I DO TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

You are an eternity-bound spiritual being who has been created by God in His image (Genesis 1:26-27; Matthew 25:31-46). He has created you in this way so that you will seek after Him rather than everything else this life offers (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14; Acts 17:26-28), putting your uniqueness to use in His service (1 Corinthians 6:19-20; 1 Peter 4:10-11). Viewing and orienting your life according to this perspective, you will let God use your life in whatever way will glorify Him and result in your life making a true difference that will have mattered!

## **ECCLESIASTES 1:1-11**

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This passage pictures each human life as part of this seemingly endless cycle of things that come and go (i.e. the sun rising and setting, the wind going in its cycles, the water cycle). Even human desire is never satisfied, and everything people do has been done before (though it takes new forms). Ultimately, he even saw each human life as part of this cycle that ultimately gets forgotten. Whatever contributions anyone may have made “under the sun” that are focused on things “under the sun” will prove to be only temporary!

## **MATTHEW 4:18-22**

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When Jesus walked the earth, He called people to be His disciples. Jesus would take people of all backgrounds (including these four fishermen who were insignificant to the world) and use them in His service to do things that would make a true difference. Namely, they would be used to make an eternal difference for the men and women they impacted through the gospel of Christ! To be a disciple of Jesus means that you will follow Jesus wherever He leads (through the teaching of His word, Luke 9:23-26), allowing Him to transform your life (Ephesians 4:17-32), and then impacting others to follow Him (Matthew 28:18-20)! In contrast with every other contribution made

“under the sun” that will ultimately lose its significance and be forgotten, your life will have made an eternal difference for you and others (1 Timothy 4:11-16)!

## **MATTHEW 5:13-16**

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Citizens of the kingdom of God live in a way that is different from the ways of this world that makes a lasting difference! Although every person has a different set of people they can impact, God uses each one to impact the people in their lives through their influence. In a world full of sin and unrighteousness, God uses kingdom citizens like salt and light on a distasteful and dark world. They will show that there is a different way to live “under the sun.” This influence can even result in others choosing to glorify God in their own lives so they can spend eternity with God in Heaven (1 Peter 2:11-12; 3:1-2)!

## **ROMANS 12:1-8**

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Whenever most people think about making a difference with their lives, they often think about coming up with an invention in medicine or technology, a humanitarian effort, a political breakthrough, or some life-altering thing as it relates to life “under the sun.” However, because of the temporary nature of everything physical and the eternal nature of everything spiritual, God urges you to see that the life which truly makes a lasting difference is the one that is sacrificed to Him! As you consider what you can do to make a difference, you should carefully and soberly reflect on what God has given to you to use in His service. Then, however much or little that is, you must determine to use it to the best of your abilities so you are a good and faithful manager of those resources (time, energy, money, ability, relationships, etc.; Matthew 25:14-30).

## **MARK 14:3-9**

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In the scope of human history “under the sun,” the life of Mary (John 12:3; Martha and Lazarus’s sister) may seem insignificant. However, God saw her contribution in Jesus’s service as being so significant that He chose to have it put in the Bible record for people of all time to learn from and be

encouraged by. Despite facing criticism, Jesus's commentary about her is simple and powerful: She had done what she could! Therefore, when you think about making a true difference through your life, this story should encourage you to simply do whatever you can to serve Jesus Christ and trust that He can use your sacrificial contribution (however big or small it may seem) to bring glory to His name and impact others for the good of His kingdom!

### **HEBREWS 11:4**

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Although Abel's life "under the sun" ended tragically thousands of years ago (Genesis 4:1-8), his faith still lives on! Although his contributions to life "under the sun" are over physically, he continues to impact people to live faithfully to God thousands of years later (by his example of faith recorded in Scripture). Even though your life will not be mentioned in the Bible for future generations to read about, you can still have a lasting impact on people through the example of your faith in God. For, if your faith in Jesus Christ is strong, other people will be impacted by your example and testimony for Christ (1 Peter 3:14-16)! Then, even long after your death, those people can continue encouraging others to follow the Lord, who can encourage others, etc. (2 Timothy 2:2). So, even though you may not be remembered by name or for the specific things you did, the influence of your faith in Christ can continue helping people follow the Lord and have eternal life in Heaven long after you have died!

### **CONCLUSION**

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God can use you to make an eternal difference in people's lives. No matter who you are and how much or little you can do, God will gladly use whatever you can do and let it be useful to glorify Him and impact people in His service. Therefore, if you truly allow God's word to develop a perspective of your life that is described within its pages, you will unlock the secrets of a life filled with true joy, purpose, and accomplishment that cannot be found any other way!

### **DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS**

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What will become of contributions made on earth that are focused on earthly things?

How will Jesus use His disciples?

How will disciples of Jesus make an eternal difference?

How will citizens of Jesus's kingdom make a difference through their examples?

How should you consider the things God has given you to use in your life?

What are some things God has given you to use in His service?

What can you learn from Mary about making a difference?

How can you be like Abel and impact others through your faith after your death?