

Study Series: Difference Makers

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 Lesson Title: “The Man on the Mat and a Few Moms”
(pp. 80-91)

Session 7

January 16, 2022

**The main point of this lesson is:** Difference makers courageously point to the Savior.

**Focus on this goal:** To help adults have courage to point to the Savior

**Key Bible Passage:** Matthew 9:1-8; 2 Corinthians 12:7-9

Before the Session

**Write** on a marker board or poster: *I am unlikely to …* (Step 1)

During the Session

Step 1. Create Interest / Jumpstart Discussion

**Draw attention** to the phrase you wrote on the board and **ask** adults how they might complete that statement. **Write** *be a difference maker* to complete the phrase. **Ask:** *What percentage of Christians do you think would make that statement?*

**Encourage** the group to identify reasons believers might think they are unlikely to be difference makers. **Read** the Day One paragraph (p. 80) beginning “The amazing thing about the Bible ….”

**Urge** adults to silently consider Day One, activity 1 (p. 80). **Read** the Difference Maker Declaration (p. 66) as your opening prayer.

Step 2. Power in Weakness

**Discuss** Day One, activity 2 (p. 81). **Consider** why Paul could have said he was unlikely to be a difference maker.

**Ask:** *What made the difference in Paul’s life so he could be a difference maker?* **Assert:** *God’s grace worked even, and especially, in the hard things in Paul’s life.*

**Invite** a volunteer to read 2 Corinthians 12:7-10. **Evaluate** why God uses people with obvious weaknesses. **Invite** volunteers to share instances when they’ve experienced God’s grace being sufficient, and His power perfected, in their weaknesses.

**Explain** the Bible is filled with stories of God using unlikely people to accomplish His purposes in this world. The group will examine some of those difference makers over the next seven sessions. In this session participants will be challenged to model the courage of a paralyzed man who pointed to the Savior.

Step 3. The Man and His Friends

**Organize** the group into three teams. **Instruct** one team to read Matthew 9:1-8, another to read Mark 2:1-12, and another Luke 5:17-26, then discuss Day Two, activity 1 (p. 82). **Invite** teams to share what they discussed.

**Inquire:** *How, and why, did Jesus start at the heart of this man’s weakness? Why did that make the religious leaders angry? How could it have made the paralyzed man angry? In your experience, do you find people have more trouble with Jesus saying, “I am God in the flesh” or “You are a sinner?” Why is recognizing both an essential step in becoming a difference maker?*

**Recall** from the last session (pp. 71-72 and last paragraph of Day Two, p. 83), how the heart exchange that results from trusting in Jesus makes believers ready to be difference makers.

Step 4. Difference Makers Have Courage

**Request** adults state the first thing Jesus told the paralyzed man to do in Matthew 9:2. **Ask** them to identify what Jesus called this man (see also Mark 2:5 and Luke 5:20). **Consider** how that in itself could have given this man courage.

**Draw attention** to the Day Three pull quote (p. 84) and **analyze** how that is easier said than done. Consider Day Three, activity 1 (p. 84) in a general sense.

**Read and discuss** the Day Three paragraph (p. 84) that begins “If we want to be difference makers in a world like this ….” **Ask** whom we often regard as the difference makers in this miracle of the paralyzed man. **Agree** the friends who carried the man to Jesus did make a difference, but the man himself was a difference maker because he exercised the courage to do what Jesus said. **Analyze** why it took great courage for him to get up and walk.

**Relate** the author’s illustration of the group of ladies praying about human trafficking (p. 85). **Consider** why that took great courage on the part of the ladies. **Urge** adults to privately consider Day Three, activity 2 (p. 86).

Step 5. Difference Makers Point to Their Savior

**Discuss** Day Four, activity 1 (p. 87). **Point out** the man did exactly what Jesus said. **Consider** things the man could have talked about on his way home and **compare** that with what he did talk about (Luke 5:25).

**Request** a volunteer read the pull quote of Day Four (p. 87). **Ask** what happens when people seek to make a difference by being successful for their own glory. **Ask:** *When we get attention for making a difference, how can we keep pointing to Jesus rather than taking the glory that belongs to Him?*

Step 6. Pastor Thomas

**Ask** a volunteer to read the first paragraph of Day Five (p. 88). **Relate** the story of Thomas from the remainder of Day Five (pp. 88-89), noting all that occurred because one man decided to be a difference maker.

Step 7. Practical Application – Live Out the Lesson

**Read** aloud Zechariah 4:6-10a. **Ask:** *What is the encouragement in these verses for people who feel they are unlikely to be difference makers?*

**Stress:** *God doesn’t scorn the day of small things, but we do. We think we’ve got to do big things, but differences are often made in small, faithful actions. However, we must exercise the courage to take each obedient step.*

**Urge** adults to consider Day Five, activity 2 (p. 89).

**Close** in prayer, asking God to help adults have the courage to be the difference makers He has called them to be.

