

## (Act)ivate (pt.1)

(Acts 1:6-14)

### Introduction

1. It's easy to lose momentum in our experience of an accelerated life with Jesus.
  - a. We can experience inertia, and be defeated before we even get started.
  - b. The Bible addresses how to move past inertia to experience acceleration.
2. Accelerate [physics]: Change in velocity or direction; causing greater activity, progress, development.
  - a. Our theme: Jesus accelerates us by the power of the Holy Spirit to experience a transformative, relational, missional life in Christ.
3. "360° Living": You were challenged to set your watch/phone to chime every 60 minutes as a reminder to stop & engage with God in 3 ways (3-60).
  - a. Connect with Jesus: Thank Him for his love, goodness, presence, blessings & plan for your life.
  - b. Ask God to show you His will in this moment: How can you embrace someone in the family of Christ?
  - c. How can you bless someone who is not a Christian yet? Then do it as an act of love toward God.
4. [Acts 1:1-5] A brief recap of the gospel of Luke, & the 40 days of Jesus' appearances after His resurrection.
  - a. Now we encounter the final conversation between Jesus & His followers.
  - b. This passage addresses 3 obstacles that create inertia, and how to move past each to an accelerated life.

### Obstacle 1: We settle for too little [Acts 1:6-8]

1. [1:6] When will Jesus restore His people's political & socioeconomic influence?
  - a. [1:7] Jesus turns this into a teaching moment.
  - b. His Father is sovereign God, who alone has authority to determine all the events in history.
  - c. Jesus is co-equal/co-eternal with the Father, but willingly submits to Him as a model of humility (Phil 2:5-8).
2. Jesus' point: You focus your hearts on the wrong thing.
  - a. You're settling for too little, second best (instead of God's will, God's best).
  - b. Instead of experiencing the life God intends, we also settle for too little with Jesus.
3. [1:8a] Instead, set your hearts on receiving the best gift from the Father (cf. Luke 11:13; Jas 1:17) – the Holy Spirit.
  - a. Instead of a little economic/political power, you can receive the presence & power of God Himself in your life.
  - b. The Holy Spirit: He's a Being, not a tool or "force."
    - i. 3<sup>rd</sup> Person of the Trinity (one God expressed in 3 persons), given to every follower (cf. Eph 1:13).
    - ii. He's sent to convict, comfort, counsel & empower us (John 14:15-26; 15:26-27; 16:7-15) to follow Jesus, grow in Jesus, & serve Jesus (Rom 8:1-17; 2 Cor 3:17; Gal 5:16-25).
    - iii. He empowers us to experience fullness of life with Jesus, and accomplish great things for Jesus.
  - c. Activate: A chemical reaction that makes a substance more active, reactive or radioactive.
    - i. To excite the compound or move it into action.
    - ii. The Holy Spirit activates the life of Jesus in us.
  - d. Instead of settling for mediocre blessing, we experience God-sized blessings by receiving the Holy Spirit.
    - i. The goal isn't to "try harder" but to remain connected (to Jesus), to receive His Spirit (Gal 4:6-7).
4. [1:8b] Jesus focuses on a specific direction of the Spirit's empowerment: "You will be My witnesses" (cf. Luke 24:48).
  - a. Mission: Start from where they are (Jerusalem; not their home region of Galilee).
  - b. Move slightly outside your comfort zone (Judea), even to people you despise (Samaria).
  - c. Keep going until the good news about the King & Kingdom reaches everyone everywhere (end of the earth).
  - d. Be part of the epicenter of an incredible movement that accelerates outward, activated by the Holy Spirit.

5. Application: Don't settle for little things (comfort, pleasure, security, sin management); seek God-sized dreams that bring the Kingdom of God to life in you & in others by the power of Jesus' Spirit.

### **Obstacle 2: We get stuck fixating on the past [Acts 1:9-11]**

1. [1:9] Jesus emphasizes His final commands & is swept up in a cloud.
  - a. Jesus ascends back to Heaven, exalted to the right hand of His Father (Phil 2:9), revealed as God.
  - b. [1:10] His followers are frozen, gazing.
  - c. [1:11a] 2 angelic beings gently chide them: Why are they still standing here, gazing?
  - d. After experiencing the miraculous revelation of Jesus as God, they remained fixated, stuck in complacency.
2. We also tend to get stuck on yesterday, & grow complacent.
  - a. We hit a wall of inertia because we're too busy gazing at yesterday.
  - b. We tend to fixate on past spiritual experiences & "glory days," rather than using them as a springboard into the next step/season God has called us.
3. [1:11b] Important theology: Jesus will return in the same manner & glory that He left (cf. 1 Thess 4:16-17; Rev 1:7).
  - a. Jesus has not deserted them, but will send His Spirit to do greater things through them (cf. John 14:12; 16:7).
  - b. Lie: Yesterday was better; I want to relive that experience with God.
  - c. Truth: Jesus is sovereign God in our current circumstances, with ongoing plans for even greater things ahead.
  - d. Motivation: We move forward to prepare for His return by being faithful in announcing the King & Kingdom.
  - e. Application: Fix your eyes on Jesus' return in glory rather than yesterday's glory to motivate & move us.

### **Obstacle 3: We're side-tracked by our differences [Acts 1:12-14]**

1. [1:12-13a] In obedience, Jesus' followers return to rental apartment in Jerusalem.
  - a. "Sabbath's day journey": About a ½ mile; they conformed to what they were legally allowed to travel according to Jewish man-made customs misinterpreting the Old Testament Law of God.
2. Third potential pitfall: Division based on their differences could derail their mission.
  - a. [1:13b] The disciples are grouped by affiliation, which could have their own interests/agendas.
    - i. Peter & John were closest to Jesus, grouped with their brothers James (John's) & Andrew (Peter's); all of them bonded as fishermen.
    - ii. Philip (Peter & Andrew's hometown friend, cf. John 1:44), Thomas (AKA Didymus), Bartholomew (AKA Nathaniel, invited by Philip), & Matthew (AKA Levi, a tax collector) joined the group next.
    - iii. James (son of Alphaeus), Simon the Zealot (part of a militant political party/revolutionary), & Judas (AKA Thaddeus, son of James; not Judas Iscariot).
    - iv. Just Matthew (tax collector) & Simon (Zealot) together should produce friction & division.
    - v. Jesus intentionally brought together this ragtag group, entrusted as leadership team of His Church.
  - b. [1:14b] They are together with other potentially divisive groups as well.
    - i. All the women followers of Jesus were equally-valued participants in the community of Christ, unheard of in the society of that day.
    - ii. Jesus' earthly family (Mary & 4 half-brothers) would have had every reason to doubt or disbelieve.
  - c. They overcame their differences because each personally witnessed the truth about Jesus.
3. How do they continue to overcome their differences & prepare for this incredible life/mission with Jesus?
  - a. [14a] All [of them], with one accord, devoted to pray, together.
  - b. "One accord": Occurs 10 times in Acts alone. [Greek] *Homothumadon*; one passion; rushing along together in unison toward a goal.
  - c. They are united praying to connect with Jesus, to grow together, for strength, wisdom & direction from the Holy Spirit to prepare them for the task ahead as a group.
4. Application: Pray as a church together, with one accord, for God's Spirit to activate us.
  - a. Pray to be filled & transformed by the Holy Spirit in our own lives.
  - b. Pray to be a church united in growing together in Christ.
  - c. Pray to be fearlessly on-mission & empowered by the Spirit as witnesses of good news.