

The Acts 1:8 Challenge: How YOU can change your world  
by Will Snipes

*But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come on you, and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. —Acts 1:8*

Jesus clearly instructed each of us who have been filled with His Spirit to go and literally change the world with the transforming message of the gospel. Many scholars interpret the specifics of Acts 1:8 in this way:

**Jerusalem:** your own hometown

**Judea:** your nation

**Samaria:** the places you might not want to go

**The ends of the earth:** well, the ends of the earth

### JERUSALEM

God has placed you in your community for a specific purpose. You are not there by accident. Start reaching out to people today with these simple ideas:

- **Talk to your friends at school about Christ.** Encourage them with Scripture when they need it. One high school junior that I know chose several verses for a struggling friend and gave them to him in writing each day. The friend recently told him, “You have given me over 200 Bible verses to read this year!” That’s simply amazing. God will honor that effort.
- **Join FCA or another on campus organization** where you can show your love for Jesus. If there’s not one at your school, find out how to get one started.
- **Minister to the people in your own backyard.** Remember all those experiences you had on your last mission trip? Feeding the homeless, working with children, visiting the sick and lonely, rebuilding and repairing homes for those in need? Keep in mind that those same experiences are probably available for you no more than 10 miles from where you live. Ask your parents, student minister, or trusted adult to help you get organized and find a place in your community where you can serve.
- **Don’t treat community service hours like a requirement.** Many schools and honor organizations now require students to complete service hours in order to further your educational experience. Instead of dreading this task, embrace it as an opportunity to serve the Lord. Most every way that you can serve on a local level—from playing with inner-city kids to doing yard work for the elderly—should qualify for these required hours. Do everything as if you are doing it for the Lord (Col. 3:23).

### JUDEA

It’s time to spread your wings a bit and fly. Maybe you (or your parents) aren’t quite ready for that first stamp on the passport, but there are tons of ways to serve and spread the gospel throughout the U.S. Here are a few ideas:

- **Let someone else do the planning.** M-Fuge is a ministry-based camp that allows students from 7th grade to college to serve in cities throughout the U.S. Not only do you get an incredible camp experience of Bible study and worship, but you also get daily opportunities to go out and love people in cities like Philadelphia, New Orleans, and Nashville, Tenn. Talk to your student minister for more information, and check out [www.fuge.com](http://www.fuge.com) for more information. Other great options for serving in the U.S. include World Changers and Power Plant, which allow you to reach out to people through service projects and help missionaries plant churches. Find out more at [www.lifeway.com/worldchangers](http://www.lifeway.com/worldchangers) and [www.lifeway.com/powerplant](http://www.lifeway.com/powerplant).

**Comment [MO1]:** Kyle, you may better know how to update this.

• **Help plant a church.** Church plants are popping up in cities and towns all over our country. These young churches are reaching out to lost and unchurched people in a variety of creative ways. Your enthusiasm and energy can be a great resource through events like block parties and other outreach efforts. Ask your pastor if he knows of a good church plant or has a pastor friend somewhere in the U.S. who might need some help during your fall or spring breaks, or even next summer. More than likely, you'll make a great connection.

• **Get involved with disaster relief.** The next time you hear about a natural disaster like a tornado or hurricane, get involved. Pray specifically for the people and their needs. Most states have disaster relief teams that deliver needed supplies and also help with clean-up. Talk to your parents or student minister to find out how you can help.

• **Make vacation a ministry opportunity.** Going on vacation anytime soon? View it as an opportunity to minister while you travel. Encourage people with a smile and a positive word. Look for ways to help others out. When you arrive in a new city, see if you can spend a day serving with a local organization. It's a really authentic way to see a city and make some new friends.

#### THE ENDS OF THE EARTH

It's a great big world out there, but with modern transportation and technology, opportunities to serve are not really that far away.

• **Go on a mission trip to another country.** International mission trips are truly life-changing. God desires for us to have a global view, to realize the vastness of this world, and recognize the spiritual darkness that exists on every continent. More importantly, He wants us to see that we can be part of making a difference. We can carry the light to dark places. Pray, plan far ahead, raise money, and be a part of the next international trip that God brings your way. You'll come home with much more than souvenirs and Facebook photos. You'll come home a new person. Check with your student minister or church to see if they're planning any international mission trips. If not, the International Mission Board offers a variety of programs for students to participate in overseas missions. Go to [www.imb.org](http://www.imb.org) and click "go" and then "students" for lots of information. Be advised—the pictures will probably have you first in line tomorrow morning for a passport.

• **Just get involved.** Find a global issue that you are passionate about and pursue it with all your heart. Clean drinking water, human trafficking, and international disaster relief are some of the most talked about issues these days. A great resource for information (in addition to Internet searches) might be older Christian friends who are in college. Today's college students are bombarded with opportunities to serve and get connected with ministries such as these. Talk to an older friend, then do something about the problem!

• **Become a sponsor.** Sponsor a child through an organization such as Compassion International ([www.compassion.com](http://www.compassion.com)) or World Vision ([www.worldvision.org](http://www.worldvision.org)). First choose an area of the world, an age range, and a boy or girl, then ask God to lead you to just the right child. The cost is \$38 per month for Compassion and \$35 for World Vision. You'll also have the opportunity to bless your child with letters and special gifts. Consider getting your friends or youth group involved with the monetary commitment.

• **Buy bracelets (or other handcrafted items).** A great organization I recently discovered is called Threads of Hope ([www.threadsofhope.com.ph](http://www.threadsofhope.com.ph)). The organization teaches men, women, and children living in impoverished areas of the Philippines to craft colorful friendship bracelets that Threads of Hope then sells. This work gives them sustainable income and a sense of pride and self-worth. I'm a middle school teacher and recently brought about 100 of these bracelets to my school. They were a hit! Every kid—from the sweetest girl

to the toughest guy—wanted to wear one of the bracelets and support people in a far-away place. Check it out!

- **Send a gift through Operation Christmas Child.** It's never too early to think about Operation Christmas Child. Organize a local effort to help send these shoeboxes of Christmas love and joy overseas this upcoming holiday season. More details are available at [www.samaritanspurse.com](http://www.samaritanspurse.com)

