

THIS IS HOW WE GOSPEL

Week 4: Paul Preaches in the Areopagus (Acts 17)

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

To maintain a healthy group, focus on four key components: Word, prayer, relationships, and outreach. This guide will help you study a biblical passage through observation, interpretation, and application. As you explore Acts 17:16-34, keep in mind this week's big idea: we gospel by boldly proclaiming Jesus in a way that connects with people's lives while trusting God with the results.

CONNECT

- Ask this ice-breaker: "Share about a time when you noticed something in your surroundings—like a conversation or a belief—that stirred you to want to share your faith. What happened, and how did you respond?"

INTRODUCTION

In Acts 17:16-34, Paul is in Athens, a city steeped in idolatry, and his spirit is provoked. He engages Jews, philosophers, and marketplace crowds, eventually speaking at the Areopagus—a place of learning, debate, and philosophy. There, he contextualizes the gospel, pointing to their altar "to the unknown god" to proclaim the true God who created all things and raised Jesus from the dead. Some mock, others are curious, and a few believe. This passage gives us insights into how to share the gospel thoughtfully and boldly in a pluralistic world, relying on God for the outcome.

OBSERVATIONS & INTERPRETATION

Read: Acts 17:16-18

Paul's "spirit was provoked" by the city's idols (v. 16). What does this reveal about how a love for God and a love for people should motivate us?

Read: Acts 17:22-28

Paul starts with the Athenians' religiosity and quotes their poets to connect with them. How does contextualize the gospel without compromising?

In v. 27, Paul says God is "not far from each one of us." How does this truth encourage us to share the gospel with people who seem far from faith?

Read: Acts 17:29-34

Paul emphasizes repentance, judgment, and the resurrection (vv. 30-31). Why are these truths central to the gospel, and how do they challenge a culture that avoids absolutes?

The responses vary—mockery, curiosity, and belief (vv. 32-34). What does this teach us about trusting God with the results of our gospel sharing?

APPLICATION

- How can you look for "gospel opportunities" this week in your everyday spaces? Who is your "one?"
- Paul was provoked by idolatry. What in your world stirs your spirit to share Jesus, and how can you respond with both boldness and sensitivity?
- Discuss how you can support each other as a group to "gospel best together." What practical steps can you take to encourage one another in sharing your faith?

PRAYER

Pray for each other, for your friends who don't know Jesus yet, and for boldness and wisdom like Paul to gospel well.