



THE GOSPEL: MAKING GOD KNOWN

Open it

1. How would someone describe you to someone who didn't know you?

Daily devotions

Day 1

TODAY'S THEME: EXPLORE IT

Read Acts 17:16–34

2. What stood out to you in this passage?
3. What did you learn about God from this passage?
4. What questions do you have after reading this passage?
5. How would you describe the Athenians that we “met” in this passage?

Day 2

TODAY'S THEME: UNDERSTANDING ATHENS

Read Acts 17:16–21

When you think of Athens, you probably think of the magnificent buildings and architecture like the Parthenon. The “glory days” for Athens took place centuries before Paul found himself walking its streets, yet it remained a hub for architectural beauty and intellectual discussions. As you read in the passage, Athens was a city of idols. Petronius was a man who lived around the same time as the Apostle Paul and he talked about how many idols were in Athens and said, “Our region is so full of deities that you may more frequently meet with a god than a man.” There are estimates that there were approximately 30,000 idols in the city and only about 10,000 people (just a little bigger than Sugar Grove). Imagine walking down the street and there are shrines and statues of idols and temples to different false gods all over the place. These people were very religious, but very lost! The people of Athens were made up mostly of upper-class educated people who loved to discuss ideas and theories. Paul’s heart broke for how lost the people were, and he saw a great opportunity to talk to them about Jesus!

6. How would you feel if everywhere you went and looked there were a bunch of different idols? How do you think that would affect your beliefs about God?

7. What are some common idols in our area of the world today?

I HAVE A QUESTION! ✍ Write it down so you can ask your leader or your parents!

PRAYER GUIDE ➤ Here are some things you could pray for today:

- Pray that God would help you identify the idols in your own life.
- Pray for opportunities in your city, that God would provide clear opportunities to share the gospel message with the people there.

Day 3

TODAY'S THEME: MEET THE EPICUREANS AND STOICS

Read Acts 17:18

What in the world are an Epicurean and a Stoic? It must be somewhat important because it's mentioned in the Bible, but I have no idea! Good question. Basically, these are two groups of people who have very different viewpoints on life and thinking. Check it out.

Epicureans: These people believed that life was about personal pleasure! Being comfortable and happy was the sole purpose in their lives here on earth. They believed that if God, or gods, existed that they were not involved in the world anymore at all, and therefore have become irrelevant to humanity. They believed that if there was a God, or gods, that they would be known only by things like the planets and stars or things that we can sense.

Stoics: These people are very different from the Epicureans. They were opposed to pleasure. They basically believed that we are just supposed to suck it up and make it through life. They were known for being impious (not very religious) and often questioned the religious beliefs of their culture's past. They would allow the idea that gods may exist but mainly for the sake of the public masses, not their own benefit.

These are the people that Paul had as an audience to share the gospel message.

8. How would you describe the main ideals of the people in your area today? What do they value? What do most people believe? What is important to them?

9. Paul was able to present the gospel in a way that connected on some level to the people who held these different beliefs. How could you present the gospel so that it would connect with the people in your area today?

I HAVE A QUESTION! ✍ Write it down so you can ask your leader or your parents!

PRAYER GUIDE ➤ Here is something you could pray for today:

- Pray that God would help you be strategic and intentional about how you can share the gospel message with the people who live life close to you.

Day 4

TODAY'S THEME: MAKING GOD KNOWN—GOD IS CREATOR

Read Acts 17:22–25

The people in Athens had all these idols and altars throughout their city. They even had one that was for “the unknown god.” Paul used this altar as a launching point to share the gospel with them. “You worship all these different gods. But I noticed you have an altar to this one god who you don’t know! Let me tell you about Him!” So Paul goes into his presentation of the gospel message. And he starts at the very beginning.

Paul wants to tell these people about the one, true God — the God the Bible talks about. He starts out by telling them about who God is as the Creator of the universe! What he tells them is basically that this unknown God created everything, including you and me. And He doesn’t need us to do anything for Him like you believe all these other gods do. He is perfect independent! As humans, we are totally dependent. We need stuff in order to survive. We need food, shelter, water, air, companionship, etc. God doesn’t need any of those things to exist!

10. How does it change how you relate to God knowing that God doesn’t *need* you, but that He loves you so much that He just *wants* to have a relationship with you?

11. Paul used a shortcoming of the Greeks’ beliefs to share the gospel message. Think about some of the things that people believe today. What are some opportunities you can think of to share the gospel where people’s faiths might be inconsistent or lacking?

I HAVE A QUESTION! ✍ Write it down so you can ask your leader or your parents!

PRAYER GUIDE ➤ Here is something you could pray for today:

- Pray that God would continue to show Himself to you through creation.

Day 5

TODAY'S THEME: MAKING GOD KNOW—GOD IS RULER

Read Acts 17:26–29

Yesterday we learned about how God created the whole universe. If He created everything, that would mean that God is also the Ruler over all of it. Unlike what the Greeks believed about their gods, that they were likely disconnected from the world, Paul teaches them that God is very much involved in His creation. He tells them about how God has created all mankind and put them in specific places around the world and set their boundaries to their kingdoms. God is the supreme Ruler of all the universe! And unlike many rulers who do not want to be involved closely with their people, Paul wants these people to know that God is the Creator and Ruler of all the universe and He has made Himself known to them, that He is already close to them. God desires to have a relationship with His people because He is a kind, loving God.

12. What kind of Ruler do believe God is? I'm not asking for what you know in your head or for you to give the Sunday School answer. I want your honest experience. What kind of ruler do you believe God is?

13. What impact does it have on your life to be reminded that God is the Ruler of ALL people and ALL nations and over ALL things in the universe? Do you live your life like that statement is true? How would you live differently if you were to live like that statement were true?

I HAVE A QUESTION! ✍ Write it down so you can ask your leader or your parents!

PRAYER GUIDE ➤ Here are some things you could pray for today:

- Pray that you would grow closer and closer to God!
- Pray for our nation's leaders and for the leaders of nations all around the world!
- Pray for the people in the world who have not yet heard about God.

Day 6

TODAY'S THEME: MAKING GOD KNOWN—GOD IS JUDGE

Read Acts 17:30–31

“He will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed.” That man is Jesus Christ. When we think of God judging the world, we think of harshness and anger. At least that’s what I normally think of right away. But God is going to judge in righteousness! That means that those of us who have trusted in Jesus Christ are going to be spared from God’s wrath. But that doesn’t mean that judgment is not going to happen for those who have not trusted in Jesus! There is a day coming when God will right every wrong and establish His justice in the world. Every human is going to give an account for his life on that day, and there will be some of us who will be welcomed into eternal glory in heaven through Jesus Christ, and there will be many who will be condemned to eternal punishment in hell.

The mission that God has given us in this lifetime is to go and make disciples of all the nations of the world. We need to tell people about Jesus Christ so that they can trust in Him for the forgiveness of their sins just like we have. Jesus is the only way we can be forgiven of our sins. When Jesus died on the cross, He paid the penalty and made the ultimate sacrifice on our behalf. But when He rose from the dead three days later, He defeated sin and death so that you and I are no longer bound by it. We can have victory over sin in our lives! We have freedom!

14. Do you know where you are going to spend eternity? How do you know?

15. Name three friends who you know right now are on a path to spend eternity in hell because they have not trusted in Jesus for the forgiveness of their sins. Right now, I want you to pray for each of those friends by name, that God would intervene in their lives and they would trust in Jesus for eternal life. Pray that God would give you opportunities to share the gospel with them.

I HAVE A QUESTION! ✍ Write it down so you can ask your leader or your parents!

PRAYER GUIDE ➤ Here are some things you could pray for today:

- Pray for the friends/family you wrote down in question 15.
- Pray for the people in the world who have never even heard of Jesus yet, that God would send people to share the gospel with them. Maybe even you!

Day 7

TODAY'S THEME: VARYING RESPONSES TO THE GOSPEL

Read Acts 17:31b–34

The Epicureans did not believe in the immortality of the soul. They believed that when you died physically, your soul died too. It's likely that these were the people who mocked Paul when he told them about Jesus' resurrection from the dead. But we aren't sure. What we do know is that some mocked Paul, some wanted to think it over and hear more, and still others believed. There are many different responses to the gospel message, but here's the thing: you can't control those responses. Sometimes we become so discouraged from sharing the gospel because we are afraid we are going to get mocked. Then we miss out on the joy of seeing people believe! Listen, someday we are going to stand before God on that day of judgment, and we are going to be glad we trusted in Jesus, and all the people who mocked us will wish they had. We have nothing to be ashamed of! That's why our youth group is called "Unashamed," because we don't want to be ashamed of the gospel, like Paul said in Romans 1:16.

So don't let the fear of how people are going to respond keep you from ever sharing.

Be Unashamed!

16. What intimidates you the most about sharing the gospel?

17. Do you think it's harder to share the gospel in a 1-on-1 setting or in a large group setting?

I HAVE A QUESTION! ✍ Write it down so you can ask your leader or your parents!

PRAYER GUIDE ➤ Here are some things you could pray for today:

- For understanding of the gospel.
- For boldness to share the gospel when given the opportunity.