

BIBLE DISCUSSION GROUP STUDY QUESTIONS

In preparation for Sunday, August 5, 2007

Passage: Acts 17:16-34

Memory Passage: Deuteronomy 6:4-5

TODAY: *From your study this past week, what is one thing that impressed you that can be of help in your life?*

DAY 1 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) Read Acts 17:16-21. What kinds of philosophies and beliefs did Paul encounter in Athens?
- (b) How would you describe the people of Athens that Paul spoke with—cultured or uncultured; intelligent or unintelligent?
- (c) What does the Bible tell us about philosophies (1 Corinthians 1:18-24)? What are we to share with even the intellectuals?
- (d) How do we cope with a world that knows or cares so little about the truth of Jesus Christ? What did they misunderstand about what Paul was preaching? Is the resurrection of Jesus as unusual to people today as it was to Paul's listeners in Athens?
- (e) What distressed Paul as he went through the city of Athens? What did his distress lead him to do? What do we normally do in our contact with people of other religions?
- (f) *Family:* Read Acts 17:16-21 and 1 Corinthians 1:18-24. Talk about philosophy. What is it? What is its value? What are its limitations? How is the gospel different? What do people think when we talk about the resurrection of Jesus? Do they misunderstand as much as the people of Athens? Pray that you will trust the power of the gospel over even the greatest philosophy.

DAY 2 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) Read Acts 17:17-21. *Where* did Paul spend his time sharing the gospel? Where did he begin? Did he stay there? How would you characterize his ministry in Athens?
- (b) What was Paul's response to being in a culture with so many gods? What did he preach?
- (c) How did the people respond to his preaching? What kinds of comments might we encounter as we preach and teach about the resurrection?
- (d) What evidence would you give for the reality of the resurrection? What evidence for the resurrection do you find in John 19:33-35; John 20:6-8; and 1 Corinthians 15:3-8?
- (e) What other types of evidence for the resurrection could be given to skeptical audiences today?
- (f) *Family:* Read Acts 17:17-21. *Which places* do you find most difficult to share the gospel? Why? *Which places* are easier to share in? Why do you think Paul began in the synagogues? What evidences could you give for the resurrection of Jesus? Pray that God might grant you an open door to share the gospel (Colossians 4:3-4).

DAY 3 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) Read Acts 17:22-28. How does Paul begin his message to the philosophers? What important principle can we learn for witnessing to those who differ greatly from our beliefs?
- (b) Compare this message with the one cut short in Lystra in Acts 14:15-17. Where does he begin? Someone has said, "The gospel is God." What does this mean? Is it correct?
- (c) Where does God dwell (Acts 7:48; 1 Kings 8:27; 2 Chronicles 2:6; Isaiah 66:1)? How does this make the one true God different from all the others?
- (d) Does God *need* anything (Psalm 50:8-13)? What aspect of God's character is Paul referring to? Why is this important to understanding God and salvation (Romans 11:33-35)?
- (e) What does God alone give (Genesis 2:7; Job 12:10; 33:4)? What did he tell them about God's sovereign choices?
- (f) *Family:* Read Acts 17:22-28 and Psalm 50:8-13. Talk together about the nature of God. What do we know about Him? How can we know this? Where does God dwell? What does God need from us? What are some of the sovereign choices God has made for you and your life? Take some time to praise God for His wonderful creation and for His sovereign control over all.

DAY 4 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) Read Acts 17:29-31. What seemingly obvious statement does Paul make about idols and God (Psalm 115:4-8; Isaiah 44:9-20)? Why do people everywhere misunderstand this (Romans 1:18-23)?
- (b) What does Paul declare about this God that they do not know? What aspects of his nature and character does he include?
- (c) What did Paul call their "Golden Age of Philosophy" (Acts 17:30)? What does Paul say about God's mercy toward them?
- (d) What has God *now* commanded for all men? Why now?
- (e) What has God appointed (Acts 10:42)? Compare this with John 5:20-29.
- (f) *Family:* Read Acts 17:29-31 and John 5:20-29. Talk about idols. What are they and why are they such an offence to God? What evidence from God can you give from creation? Why don't people believe this evidence? How has God shown His love for mankind? Will God be just to judge those who do not come to faith in Christ? Pray for someone you know who does not know Jesus.

DAY 5 – ASK FOR INSIGHT**READ THE PASSAGE**

- (a) Some say all religions are the same. What arguments does Paul use to contradict this notion?
- (b) Read Acts 17:32-34. What were the reactions of the Athenians? What is significant about Dionysius? What does this tell us about the effectiveness of Paul's approach?
- (c) What is most difficult for you in witnessing? What have you learned from Paul's approach in Athens that can help in witnessing?
- (d) Do you think Paul appeared foolish to some in Athens? Why did he continue to share about the resurrection (1 Cor. 1:18)?
- (e) Read Ecclesiastes 11:1 and 11:6. How can these be an encouragement in evangelism?
- (f) *Family*: Read Acts 17:32-34. Did everyone Paul shared with believe in Jesus? Why not? What should we expect whenever we share the gospel? What should we do if some wish to hear more? Pray that you might be prepared to share the gospel with someone this week.

DAY 6 – ASK FOR INSIGHT**READ THE PASSAGE**

Think back through what you have learned each day this week. Read Acts 17:16-34. Why is the gospel so much more powerful at bringing people to faith in Christ than philosophies? Why is the resurrection so essential to Christianity? Can we share the gospel apart from sharing who God is and what God has done? Explain. What does God now require from everyone? Pray for the teaching of the Word tomorrow that the God of the gospel would be proclaimed to all.

DATE: August 5, 2007

PASSAGE: Acts 17:16-34

The God of the Gospel

“He has appointed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness...”