

## Dig Deeper into Acts 17:16-34 for personal study and lifegroups...

**Acts 17:16-34 Paul in Athens**

CHRIST CHURCH HUNTINGDON

① The motivation Paul had... v16-21  
... is fuelled by the honour of God

② The message Paul shared... V22-31  
...is filled with the reality of God

- **CREATOR**- He made us, we didn't make him!
- **SUSTAINER**- He keeps us going, not vice versa!
- **RULER**- He rules over us, we don't house him!
- **FATHER**- He gave rise to us, we don't give rise to him!
- **JUDGE**- ☞ So turn back before you meet his Son!

③ The mark Paul left... V32-34  
...three reactions: ridicule interest belief

The honour of God

As Paul works around the Mediterranean on his “Second Missionary Journey” (see the map under resources below), he shares the good news in sophisticated and worldly cities. Having been kicked out of Thessalonica, he waits for his colleagues, but far from being inactive, Paul is back proclaiming the message of Jesus to strangers in this next city of Athens. There is a lot we can learn from him about the good news, and why our towns and cities need it.

1. What did Paul see, feel, and do in Athens? What do you have to believe in order to feel distressed at seeing people worship other gods? Why should this lead onto speaking about Jesus? How can we begin to overcome our natural reticence to speak about Jesus?
2. What can we learn from the way in which Paul makes connections with the people and issues he sees around him? Looking around Huntingdon, can you name three issues that people are grappling with, and then think about how the good news of Jesus liberates people?
3. What are the idols that Christians fall for<sup>1</sup>? Using the teaching about God's character and nature in v24-31 how is the true and living God so much more wonderful?
4. [If time: (v31)]How would you explain simply to a non-Christian friend why the resurrection of Jesus proves the judgement? How do you know it was history?]
5. How might this passage change the way you pray “hallowed be your name” for yourself and your friends? Spend some time in prayer along these lines.

### Resources...

- <https://www.esv.org/resources/esv-global-study-bible/map-44-08/> A map from the excellent ESV study Bible on this “Second missionary journey”.
- <https://bibleproject.com/guides/book-of-acts/> See here for some resources from the Bible Project including two videos overviewing the book as a whole in a pictorial way.
- “Counterfeit Gods” - a book by Tim Keller on how the empty promises of love, money and power let you down. Available from [10ofthose here](#) and on Audible as audio [here](#).

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<sup>1</sup> A great quote from John Stott's “Bible Speaks Today” commentary on Acts (p287). “Idolatry is the attempt either to localise God, confining him within limits which we impose, whereas he is the **Creator** of the universe; or to domesticate God, making him dependent on us, taming and taping him, whereas he is the **Sustainer** of human life; or to alienate God blaming him for his distance and his silence, whereas he is the **Ruler** of nations, and not far from any of us; or to dethrone God, demoting him to some image of our own contrivance or craft, whereas he is our **Father** from whom we derive our being. In brief, all idolatry tries to minimise the gulf between the Creator and his creatures, in order to bring him under our control”.